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THE WAYFARERS

A RURAL PLAY

BY

KATHARINE KAVANAUGH

DICK & FITZGERALD
PUBLISHERS
18 Ann Street, New York

PLAYS FOR FEMALE CHARACTERS ONLY

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DICK & FITZGERALD, Publishers, 18 Ann Street, N. Y.

THE WAYFARERS

A Rural Play in Four Acts

By KATHARINE KAVANAUGH

AUTHOR OF A BACHELOR BABY

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THE WAYFARERS.

CHARACTERS.

UNCLE BILLY LARKINS	
JOSH WATERBURY.....	<i>The Constable</i>
HEZEKIAH GREEN.....	<i>The Animal Poet</i>
FRANK DUDLEY.....	<i>An Adventurer</i>
JIM WATSON.....	<i>A slave to drink</i>
REV. JOHN GRAHAM.....	<i>The "Little Minister"</i>
MISS PHILURA.....	<i>Uncle Billy's sister</i>
EMMALINE LARKINS.....	<i>Uncle Billy's niece</i>
BESSIE LYNN	}..... <i>The Wayfarers</i>
CLYTIE	
THE MUTT	

TIME OF PLAYING.—About two and one-half hours.

LOCALITY.—A country village near Boston.

SYNOPSIS.

ACT I.—Exterior of UNCLE BILLY'S home, a day in June. UNCLE BILLY and MISS PHILURA discuss old memories. PHILURA suspicious. "It takes a woman to see which way the wind's a blowin'." The stranger. A slave to drink. "I knew someone by that name years ago." DUDLEY and EMMALINE. DUDLEY goes to town. The constable. "Who is that feller, BILLY?" The bank robbery. JOSH an unsuccessful suitor. The Animal Poet. "Are you doin' anything for it?" The arrival of the Wayfarers. "A ham sandwich and a leming pie." The Wayfarers find a home. The little minister. "That chapter of my life is closed forever." The accident to PHILURA.

ACT. II.—Kitchen of UNCLE BILLY'S home same evening. The quarrel. DUDLEY'S return. JOSH tells of the robbery. "Laugh, gol darn ye, laugh!" EMMALINE and DUDLEY. CLYTIE learns a few things. A general clean-up. The minister and CLYTIE. "She couldn't cuss, could she?" The Animal Poet interrupts. Washing dishes. WATSON in search of DUDLEY. The partnership is dissolved. "I'm not even good enough to be a thief." The little room upstairs. The meeting of DUDLEY and BESSIE. "One of us must leave here." DUDLEY in an ugly mood. CLYTIE and the mutt.

ACT III.—The little room upstairs, a few hours later. The sad story of UNCLE BILLY'S daughter. "This was her room." CLYTIE parts with the mutt. Confidences. BESSIE'S good-night song. CLYTIE investigates. The photograph of MARGARET. The resemblance. WATSON comes to steal. He discovers the photograph. "Then this was her home." Remorse. The apparition.

ACT IV.—Same as ACT II. Next morning. JOSH and HEZ. as minions of the law. A deputy *boney fido*. BILLY gives a few points to JOSH. DUDLEY'S insinuations. "We'll cross that bridge when we come to it." The mutt decorated. A nameless little beggar. WATSON able to speak. "Where is my MARGARET'S baby?" A wreck of a man. "If she can forgive me, perhaps God will be as good." CLYTIE learns she has a family. "I'm going with you." BILLY relents. "You gave me a home once." JOSH and HEZ. in the nick of time.

COSTUMES.

Modern and appropriate to the character portrayed.

INCIDENTAL PROPERTIES.

Newspaper, coin, pistol, and handcuffs for JOSH. Flask, glass, dinner-bell and dish-pan for PHILURA. Notebook and wheelbarrow for HEZ. Lantern and oil-can for BILLY. Broom, photograph, dress, ribbons, etc. for CLYTIE. Money for DUDLEY.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

As seen by a performer on the stage facing the audience, R. means right hand, and L. left hand of stage. C., center. D. R. C., door right center of rear flat. R. U. E. and L. U. E., right and left upper entrances. Up means towards rear of stage. Down, towards footlights.

THE WAYFARERS.

ACT I.

SCENE.—*Exterior of LARKIN'S farmhouse. Set house with broad veranda R. Fence rear with gate C. Old well up R. with bucket and bench. Tree down L. in bloom. Bench under tree, with pan of potatoes and knife.*
DISCOVERED UNCLE BILLY LARKINS *sitting on porch in rocker, reading newspaper.* MISS PHILURA *standing at gate, looking off L.*

BILLY (*puts paper on lap, removes glasses to wipe them. Glances at PHILURA*). What are ye lookin' for, Philura? Expecting comp'ny?

PHILURA (*coming down L. to bench*). No I ain't expectin' comp'ny, but I do think it about time Emmaline was gettin' back. She's been gone the whole endurin' mornin'. (*Sits on bench and begins to pare potatoes*)

BILLY (*picking up his paper*). Oh, I thought maybe you were expectin' Josh Waterbury.

PHILURA. Never you mind about Josh Waterbury. Josh Waterbury ain't worryin' me none. A man that's been constable for three years and never caught anything yet, don't stand much chance of catchin' a wife.

BILLY. Well, if he'd stick as close to a criminal as he does to you, he'd have better luck.

PHILURA. Now, don't you start pesterin' me about my love affairs. You'd better keep an eye on your niece's.

BILLY. Who, Emmaline? Oh, Emmaline ain't got no beaux.

PHILURA. That's all you know about it. It takes a woman to see which way the wind's a-blowin'.

BILLY. What are you talkin' about, Philura, you keep cacklin' and cacklin' but you never say nuthin'.

PHILURA. I'm talkin' about Emmaline and that Dudley fellow.

BILLY. Oh, Mr. Dudley is all right.

PHILURA. How d'ye know? Did you ever set eyes on him before he came here?

BILLY. Oh, Philura, you're too suspicious. Just because you haven't known a man all his life——

PHILURA. Well, you've *got* to know some of them all their lives before you can trust 'em—and then you're takin' chances. First thing you know, she'll be running away with some worthless scamp, just as Margaret did.

BILLY (*puts paper aside and rises*). That'll do, Philura.

PHILURA. That's right, shut me up. If you had listened to me seventeen years ago, Margaret wouldn't now be lying in her grave.

BILLY (*comes off porch*). How often have I told you that my daughter's name is not to be mentioned in my presence. She left me for a drunken scoundrel. From that hour she ceased to be my daughter.

PHILURA. That's very easy for you to say, but she *is* your daughter just the same. Why did you let her *meet* a man of that character?

BILLY. I knew nothing about it until it was too late. It was the winter she spent in Boston that she became acquainted with him. The folks there wrote and told me about him. When I brought her home and forbade her to see him again she ran away and married him.

PHILURA. And no word ever came from her?

BILLY. Yes, once, when her little girl was born; she wrote and asked to come home.

PHILURA. And you refused her?

BILLY. Yes, God forgive me, I refused to let her come. For one long year I held out, then I couldn't stand it any longer. I went to Boston to find her and bring her home. I was too late. She was dead and buried. The husband had taken the child and disappeared, no one knew where.

PHILURA. And he was a drunkard!

BILLY. Yes, and a criminal besides. Think of that little baby in the hands of such a man. What will become of her—what kind of a woman will *she* make?

PHILURA. And she is your grandchild.

BILLY. Don't, Philura! I don't want to think of it.

PHILURA. Did you ever see the man, Brother Billy?

BILLY. No, never laid eyes on him. Lucky for him I didn't. He knew better than to come here. Strange, ain't it, that I dreamt of Margaret last night. I've been thinking of her all day. I wonder why? (*Turns toward porch*)

ENTER WATSON C., *from R.*

WATSON (*he is pale and trembling. Has appearance of a man who is a slave to drink. Is perfectly sober, but suffering for a drink. Comes down c.*). I beg your pardon, sir. (*BILLY and PHILURA turn and look at him*)

PHILURA. Land sakes, who's that.

WATSON. I'm looking for Mr. Dudley, ma'am.

BILLY. He ain't here just now.

WATSON. This is where he boards, isn't it?

BILLY. Yes, he's stoppin' here. Do you want to come in and wait for him?

WATSON. No, may be I'd better not. He mightn't like it.

BILLY. Mightn't like what?

WATSON. My coming here; he told me not to do it, but I wanted to see him. I must see him.

BILLY. See here, my man, you're trembling like a leaf; are you sick?

WATSON. Yes—I'm suffering—if I only had something to brace me up.

BILLY. From all indications, you've been on a spree; now, ain't you?

WATSON. Yes, that's my trouble, drink. I've been trying to do without it, but I can't stand it any longer,—it's the craving for it that's killing me. If I don't have a drink soon, I'll go mad.

BILLY. Philura, put down them potatoes and get me my flask.

PHILURA. Now, brother Billy—

BILLY. Do as I tell you. I know when a man needs a drink. (*PHILURA places pan on bench*) [*EXIT into house.*]

WATSON. God bless you, sir; you don't know the agony of it. Why, sometimes I've felt that I could commit murder for just one glass of whiskey.

BILLY. It's going to kill you some day, my friend.

WATSON. I know it, I hope the day comes soon. It's ruining me body and soul. (*Sits on bench, head in his hands, dejected*)

BILLY. Can't you make a fight against it?

WATSON. It's too late. It has been my master for twenty years.

BILLY. But this ain't a local option town; couldn't you get a drink down in the village?

WATSON. I haven't a penny. That's what I wanted Dudley for. He's got to give me some money. We're kind of partners, you know.

BILLY. But *he* holds the purse.

WATSON. Yes, he holds it tight too. You see, if I had the money I'd been drunk all the time.

ENTER PHILURA *from house with glass and flask.*

PHILURA. Here you are, Brother Billy, go on and help another poor sinner along the path to ruin. (*Gives flask and glass to BILLY*)

BILLY (*takes flask and glass and pours drink*). Shut up, Philura. Here, drink that—that's just enough to pull you together. Try to get a hold on yourself and be a man.

WATSON (*hastily drinks*). Yes, thank you, sir. I'll be all right now.

BILLY. Sit down and rest. Mr. Dudley may be along presently.

WATSON (*going to gate c.*). No, I'll go. I've got an appointment with him in town. May be it will be just as well for him not to know I was here. You won't tell him will you.

BILLY. Well, perhaps I wouldn't mention it but it would be too much to expect Philura to keep her mouth shut. (*Gives glass to PHILURA who puts it on porch*)

WATSON. Well, I guess it don't matter one way or the other; I'd tell him myself if I had a few more drinks in me. Whiskey gives you courage. Good day, sir, and thank you again, Mr.— (*WATSON is up stage, at gate*)

BILLY. Larkins is my name.

WATSON (*catches on gate to steady himself*). Larkins!

BILLY. Yes,—what's the matter.

WATSON. Nothing—only I knew someone by that name, years ago. It made me remember—that's all. Good-day, sir.

[EXIT *quickly c. going L.*

PHILURA (*crosses to bench. Peels potatoes*). Well, if that's a specimen of Mr. Dudley's friends, the less Emmaline has to do with him, the better.

BILLY. Is Emmaline with Mr. Dudley now? (*Goes up and looks off L.*)

PHILURA. Yes, been with him all the mornin', loiterin' along some shady lane, I reckon, makin' eyes at each other.

BILLY. What do *you* know about shady lanes, Philura?

PHILURA. I don't know much about them. All my time's taken up makin' beds, sweepin' floors, and parin' vegetables. Nothin' but work, work, work, from mornin' till night. And there's Emmaline kin play the lady and go off strollin' with the first stranger that comes along. I tell you what, Brother Billy, you've got to get some help on this place. My patience and my strength is pretty nigh worn out.

BILLY (*goes to porch and sits*). All right, Philura; get that Hawkins girl you had here last spring, she's a likely girl to help around.

PHILURA. What! That lazy good-for-nothin' piece. She ain't worth the salt that goes in her bread.

BILLY. Well, there's colored Mary that works for the Johnsons.

PHILURA. Steals every last thing she kin lay her hands on. The Johnsons had to discharge her.

BILLY. Well, get anybody you like, I'll pay the bill.

PHILURA. I'll get *somebody*; I ain't agoin' to ruin my health and good looks workin' like a slave for nobody. (EMMALINE and DUDLEY appear R.)

BILLY. Here comes Emmaline now.

PHILURA. Well goodness knows, it's about time.

ENTER EMMALINE and DUDLEY C. EMMALINE R. *carrying a bunch of wild flowers.*

BILLY. Hello, folks; been takin' a stroll?

DUDLEY (*crosses to L. C.*). Yes, quite a delightful one.

EMMALINE (*goes on porch to BILLY*). Look, Uncle Billy, aren't they pretty? (*Holds flowers for BILLY to smell*)

BILLY (*smells flowers*). Sweet as honey.

PHILURA (*paring potatoes*). Goin' to eat 'em for dinner?

EMMA. Eat them? Why, no, Aunt Philura.

PHILURA. Well, you don't seem to be botherin' your head about gettin' anything else ready.

EMMA. (*comes from porch but remains R.*) Why, I thought you were getting dinner, Aunt Philura.

PHILURA. Oh, ye did, did ye; well, hereafter, don't you rely too much on Aunt Philura doin' everything. There's enough work in that house (*Points with knife*) for three women, let alone one.

EMMA. Well, don't I help some!

PHILURA. Yes, pickin' wild flowers. They're a lot of good, ain't they? What was you expectin' to do with 'em?

EMMA. I thought they'd look pretty on the dinner table.

PHILURA. Oh, my, gettin' mighty high-falutin, ain't ye, since ye got comp'ny. (*Glances toward DUDLEY*)

BILLY. Now, Philura, stop your naggin'. Don't mind her, Emmaline; go in the house and set the table for dinner.

EMMA. (*goes on porch, turns toward DUDLEY*). Won't you come in and help, Mr. Dudley?

DUDLEY. I'd like to, but I've got to run into town, you know, and the sooner I go the sooner I'll get back.

BILLY. Ain't goin' before dinner are ye?

DUDLEY. Yes, I have a business appointment, and have just sufficient time to make it.

PHILURA. Oh, by the way, there was a——

BILLY. Shut up Philura.

DUDLEY. What was that Miss Philura?

PHILURA. Oh, nothin'. Be home for supper?

DUDLEY. I hope so, but if I'm not, please don't wait for me.

PHILURA. We won't.

EMMA. (*at door, holds out hand toward DUDLEY*). I'll wait, Mr. Dudley.

DUDLEY (*takes EMMA's hand*). Will you? Then I'll make an effort to get back as early as possible. (*Goes up c.*) Anything I can do for you in town? (*Includes all three*)

PHILURA. Yes, get me a bottle of Mme. Graham's Complexion Beautifier.

EMMA. Oh, Aunt Philura, Mr. Dudley can't ask for that.

PHILURA. Very well, then don't bother.

DUDLEY (*laughing*). So long, then, until this evening. (*Goes to gate*)

PHILURA. Oh, Mr. Dudley.

DUDLEY (*pauses*). Yes!

PHILURA. Wish you'd stop a Rosenberg's and get me one of May Manton's latest pattern sheets.

DUDLEY (*laughing*). Why, that's worse than the beautifier, Miss Philura.

PHILURA. Oh, all right, don't see what you asked for if you didn't have any intention of doin' somethin'. EXIT DUDLEY *c.* *going l.* *laughing, and EMMA. into house.*

ENTER JOSH *c.* *from r.* *pauses at gate, looks after DUDLEY, then comes down c.*

JOSH. Who was that fellow, Billy?

BILLY. Hello, Josh. Oh, his name's Dudley, stoppin' here with us for a spell.

JOSH. Didn't know you kept boarders.

BILLY. We don't as a rule. Mr. Dudley asked us as a favor to board him for a while, the grub at the hotel didn't agree with him.

JOSH. Pity for him. What's his business here?

PHILURA. What's it your business what his business is?

JOSH. I'm the constable, ain't I, and it's my business to know everybody else's business. Besides he's a stranger, and I'm lookin' up the record of every stranger in town.

BILLY. What be you doin' that for?

JOSH. The Warrenville First National Bank was robbed last night.

BILLY. You don't say.

PHILURA. Land sakes, Josh Waterbury. Why didn't you say so, standin' there like a clam, and never tellin' a body a word about it.

JOSH. I'm tellin' you now ain't I? There's been lots of 'spicious characters hanging 'round since the last circus. And, oh, by the way, while I think of it, I want to warn you. There'll be a troupe of play actors in town next Tuesday, you want to see that the chickens are locked up.

BILLY. How much was took from the bank, Josh?

JOSH. Every tarnal cent that was in it—nine hundred dollars.

BILLY. By thunder that was a good haul. Any clues?

JOSH. Not a single solitary clue. Job was done by an expert.

PHILURA. Well, they don't expect *you* to catch him, do they?

JOSH. I'm constable, ain't I?

PHILURA. In name only.

JOSH. Give me time, Philura; I've only been constable three years. I'll ketch somethin' one of these days, gosh ding it.

PHILURA. And when you do the whole town will shut up shop and celebrate.

BILLY. Well, I don't reckon our boarder's got anything to do with the robbery; he seems to be a nice easy-goin' sort of chap.

JOSH. Ah, them's the fellers—them easy-goin' ones. If criminals went around lookin' like criminals, us constables and other minions of the law would have a cinch, as the

sayin' is. It's the wolf in sheep clothin' that we look out for. As we lawyers say, Tungti panamas!

PHILURA. What's that?

JOSH. That's Latin, Philura.

PHILURA. Sounds like the name of a disease. (*Rising, with pan in hands*) Well, if the truth was known, all men are sheep in wolves clothin'. I ain't got no use for any of you. (*Starts toward house*)

JOSH. Now, Philura, you know you don't mean that. (*BILLY stands on veranda folding paper*)

PHILURA (*pushes JOSH out of her way*). Oh, shut up, go 'long about your business and find your bank thief. He could take a steamer and go to Europe while you stand here chinnin' about it. (*Reaches veranda and motions BILLY into house*) Go in the house Brother Billy. Josh Waterbury'll stand there shootin' his mouth off as long as anybody listens to him.

BILLY (*laughing*). Won't you come in, Josh?

PHILURA. No, he won't. (*Pushes BILLY into house; then turns toward JOSH*) The county pays your salary to hunt criminals don't it?

JOSH. Y—yes.

PHILURA. Well, go earn your salary. [*EXIT into house.*]

JOSH (*looking at door*). And to think that's the woman I hope to make my wife. Love is a mighty peculiar thing. Now, my common sense tells me, if I marry Philura, she'll devil the life out of me, and still I'm longing for the day she'll say yes. Speakin' ad valorem, we men may not be much of anything else, but we're all tarnal fools where women are concerned. (*Turns up stage, as HEZEKIAH ENTERS. Watches HEZ. for a while before speaking to him*) Hello, Hez., what are ye doin'?

HEZEKIAH (*raises hand*). S—sh—not so loud; can't you see, I'm lost in thought?

JOSH. I thought you were walkin' in your sleep. What are you figurin' at?

HEZ. Me soul is lost in the realm of poetry.

JOSH. You mean poultry, don't ye?

HEZ. No, I'm a poet. Me friends and admirers calls me "de animal poet."

JOSH. Why?

HEZ. 'Cause all me poetry is about animals. Oh, it's a wonderful t'ing to be a poet, Josh.

JOSH. I reckon it must be; I didn't know you were afflicted that way.

HEZ. Nobody dreamed it. I've been a poet all this time and nobody found it out but meself. And I didn't know it until I began composing de most beautiful poems all about pigs and things.

JOSH. Are you doing anything for it?

HEZ. Dere's nothin' kin be did, 'cept write and write and write until it's all writ out of me, until me soul is unburdened. Oh, de music what is in me soul! Will it ever come out to de world what's waitin' for it. Was you ever a poet, Josh?

JOSH. No, I've been perfectly healthy all my life. What form does all this soul music take, Hez.? What do you write about?

HEZ. Animals; mostly pigs and fleas.

JOSH. Do you call a flea an animal?

HEZ. Ah, dat's me poetic license—us poets kin call a flea an animal if it suits us.

JOSH. Then I reckon you would call a cow an insect?

HEZ. If dere comes a choice between a beautiful line and the truth, we'd sacrifice the truth all the time.

JOSH. Have you got any of it ready that you kin recite right off?

HEZ. Bushels of it; I write just as it comes to me, and it's comin' all the time. Here's a beautiful one about a flea. (*Takes out notebook*)

JOSH. I don't see how anything kin be beautiful about a flea.

HEZ. Dat's because you got no po'try in your soul. Listen: (*Reads.*)

“A little flea is a beautiful thing
It has no legs and it has no wing;

JOSH. But a flea *has* legs.

HEZ. Dis flea hasn't. Dis is a different kind of flea altogether from de kind you bin 'sociatin' wid. (*Reads.*)

“But oh, de place dat little flea goes,
And how it gets dere, nobody knows.”,
By Prof. Hezekiah Obadiah Hiram Green.
de Animal Poet.

JOSH. Is that all of it?

HEZ. Ain't that enough?

JOSH. Plenty.

HEZ. Den, here's anoder one about dat beautiful animal called a pig. Dis ain't quite as sad as the last one; but it has more music to it.

I had a piece of fig, and I gave it to a pig,
And he eat it and he eat it, and he' et it.
And I said, Oh, Mr. Pig, please give me back my fig,
And he said: Uh-uh—forget it.

What do you think of that?

JOSH. I think I'd better go down to the insane asylum and pick out a nice comfortable room for you. (*Going up stage disgusted*) Poet! You're a mugwump.

[EXIT C. *going R.*

HEZ. Mugwump! Hah—dat's an animal I forgot all about. I'll have to write that down. (*Makes note in book. Looks absently at cord on finger*) Now, what's that string around my finger for? Oh, yes, me mudder sent me to borrow the wheelbarrow, and she put that string there so I wouldn't forget it. Since I become a poet me mind wanders away from common things. (*At door of house*) Oh, Miss Philura— (*Comes down R. C.*) I bet she's makin' a pie for dinner, I kin smell it. (*Calls without looking at door*) Miss Philura— (*PHILURA comes to door. HEZ. continues to call*) Oh, Miss Philura—Miss—

PHILURA. Well, how long you goin' to keep that up? What do you want anyway?

HEZ. Me mudder said, will you please'm lend her your wheelbarrow for a little while.

PHILURA. Land sakes, your mother has borrowed most everything we've got except that; what does she want with the wheelbarrow?

HEZ. She's goin' to make a beef-stew.

PHILURA. Well, the next time you want to borrow anything come into the house and ask for it. (*Turns as if to ENTER*)

HEZ. (*about to follow her*). Y—yes'm.

PHILURA (*turns back*). D'ye think I've got nothin' to do but run to the door every whipstitch? (*Turns toward door*)

HEZ. (*same business*). No'm.

PHILURA (*turns back*). Why in the name of heaven don't your mother buy a few things? [EXIT *into house.*

HEZ. (*follows her*). It's cheaper to borrow 'em.

[EXIT *into house.*

ENTER CLYTIE *with dog, c. from L.*

CLYTIE. Say, mutt, dis seems kind of respectable. What d'ye say, let's strike 'em for a hand-out. Which would you ruther have—a ham sandwich or a piece of leming pie? Don't make no difference to you? All right, we'll strike 'em for both. Now, dere's one thing I wants to impress on yous before we begins operations. *Don't butt in.* Keep dat mug of yours in de background. You spoiled de game at the last house, you remember. I put you around de corner of de house, and I told you to stick dere. Did you stick? Not much you didn't. Just as I finished me spiel about being cold and hungry on a hot summer's day, and de lady had tears in her eyes, and a corn-beef sandwich in each hand, you sticks your nose around the corner of the house and barks—and it was all off. She didn't like dogs. Now may be dis lady don't like dogs, neither, so you wants to make yourself scarce, see, though you ain't really a dog—you're a mutt. Now, minds what I'm tellin' yous. (*Takes him towards side of house*) Lay low till I see how the land lies. (*Puts him back of house and comes down c.*) If it's all skeegy—den you can come out and I'll introduce you in de style to which you bein' accustomed. Well, here goes to tackle the lady of the house. (*Raps at door and comes down c.*) Gee, me heart's a bumping a hole in me ribs.

ENTER PHILURA, *but remains on porch. Looks with surprise at CLYTIE.*

PHILURA. Well, heavens and earth, who are you, and where did you come from?

CLYTIE. Say, lady, don't look at me like dat'—I know I ain't got me Sunday duds on, but I was afraid de walkin' would spoil them. You see, me ortomobile broke down, and me chiffonier had to take it back to town, so me and me friends had to tramp it.

PHILURA. How far have you come?

CLYTIE. We shook the dust of Boston off our feet day before yesterday.

PHILURA. Well, what do you want?

CLYTIE (*sizing herself up*). Well, if der's anythin' we don't want, I'd like to know what it is. But, we might start off wid a ham sandwich.

PHILURA (*comes off porch*). Oh, you're hungry are you?

CLYTIE. Oh, no'm, not at all, we simply wants de sandwich as a souvenir.

ENTER BILLY *who remains on porch.*

BILLY. Why, who have you got there, Philura?

PHILURA (*crosses to L. C.*). I don't know exactly who or what it is, it looks like a bundle of rags.

CLYTIE. Dat's enough. I didn't come here to be insulted. Me and me friends will wander on where people is more polite, and sandwiches is more plentiful. (*Starts up stage haughtily*)

BILLY. Hold on, Sissie; you ain't going away from here without your dinner. Philura, you've been wantin' somebody to help around the house. Now here's your chance. This girl looks like she's in need of a home. (*To CLYTIE*) How would you like to stay here, Sissie, just to help around a bit?

CLYTIE. Would there be a dinner every day?

BILLY. Yep, and a supper and breakfast besides.

CLYTIE. Dat settles it, I'll stay the rest of me natural life.

PHILURA. But Brother Billy, we don't know anything about the girl. Who are you anyway?

CLYTIE. I'm just Clytie, dat's all. I never had another name.

PHILURA. Who are your parents? Who do you belong to?

CLYTIE. I never had no parents. I don't belong to nobody but meself.

BILLY. Who raised you?

CLYTIE. I guess I raised meself. D'ere was an old woman dat brung me up by de hair of me head until I was about eleven years old, but she drank too much whiskey and died and went to heaven, or to de odder—I don't know where she went, but she died all right. Since then I've been buttin' around on my own hook.

BILLY. Was she your mother?

CLYTIE. Now, didn't I tell yous I never had none. Dis old woman said she found me when I was no more than a year old. I don't remember that. The first thing I remember, was a beatin' she gave me 'cause I didn't beg enough for her to get drunk on.

BILLY. Well, you can have a home right here, as long as you are a good girl and behave yourself. What do you say?

CLYTIE. I'm here with the bells on. But I got a friend around the corner here dat I can't part with. If I stay, he stays too.

PHILURA. For goodness sake, who is it?

CLYTIE. Wait, I'll introduce you. (*Gets the dog*) Lady, dis is de mutt. (*To mutt*) Bow to de lady. 'Cuse him, he left his manners home on the mantelpiece. Kin the mutt stay too?

BILLY (*laughing*). Yes, I got no objections. Bring him right in. (*BILLY starts towards the door*)

CLYTIE. Wait a minute (*Confidentially*) I got another friend across the road. She was tired walkin' and I made her rest under a tree, while I investigated. She's the best friend I got in the world. If you don't take her, why, me and the mutt will have to go—and I know you wouldn't like to part with the mutt.

PHILURA. What is it—another dog?

CLYTIE. No. I ain't carryin' a menagerie. It's a poor sick girl dat's had a lot of hard luck. De both of us, was down and out, so we thought we'd hike out to the green fields, and see if our luck would change. Say, it's great to be in the country, even if you do sleep in hay lofts and live on hand-outs. Well, what's the verdict, kin Bess stay too?

BILLY. Bring her here, and we'll talk it over.

CLYTIE. She's right across the road. (*Goes up c. and calls off l.*) Hey, Bess, come on over, it's all skeegy. (*Returns down c.*) You see me friend's been sick. Dat's why I make her rest once in a while. We've been trampin' all the mornin', but it don't hurt me none, 'cause I'm tough. (*ENTER BESSIE C. from l., CLYTIE takes her hand, and draws her down stage*) Bess, it kind 'a looks like we're goin' to be adopted. What do you say—are you game?

BESSIE. I don't understand, Clytie.

PHILURA (*to BESS.*). Is it true, what this child has been telling us, that you two have no home?

BESS. (*arm around CLYTIE*). Yes, it is quite true. We had a little home. Clytie and I, just a small room in a tenement but that was when we both—

CLYTIE. When we both had a job—

BESS. In a factory in Boston—

CLYTIE. But the work was so hard, and the place so hot that Bess. got sick, and then I got sassy to the forelady, and got fired.

BESS. (*with her arm around CLYTIE*). She got into trouble on my account. The woman said something about me that Clytie didn't like——

CLYTIE. And I told her she was a—— (*BESS. quickly puts her hand over CLYTIE's mouth*)

BILLY. Are you sisters?

BESS. No, just friends, the best of friends.

BILLY. Would you like to stay here, and help with the housework, just for your board and clothes.

BESS. Oh, yes, sir, if you will take us. I'm not very strong yet, but these few days in the country have helped me wonderfully. It won't be long before I'll be myself again.

BILLY. You say you've been ill?

BESS. Yes, just a break-down, that's all. I have had a great trouble in my life.

PHILURA (*she is now L.*). Trouble! Huh! I don't like that. Man at the bottom of it I reckon.

BESS. (*a little frightened*). Why do you say that?

PHILURA. Because they usually are at the bottom of every trouble that amounts to anything.

BESS. Well, if you'll forgive me, I'd rather not go into that. I want to forget if I can.

BILLY. Well, Philura, what do you say?

PHILURA. It may be all very well, but I don't like this secret trouble business. A woman with a past is a mighty dangerous article to have around. (*CLYTIE and the dog stand quietly up c.*)

BILLY (*to BESS.*). You say you'd like to stay?

BESS. Only on one condition, that you will not question me further.

BILLY. That's agreed. But there's one question you must answer fair and square before you enter my house to make your home among us. I have a niece in there, a young innocent girl that I am trying to bring up into a fine good woman. Is there anything in the life you are leaving behind you, that would make you an unfit associate for her?

BESS. My conscience is clear, sir.

BILLY. That's enough for me. (*Comes down on stage*) Philura, take these young women in the house and give them a room.

PHILURA (*crossing to house*). You're doing a mighty foolish thing, Brother Billy. I only hope you don't live to regret it.

BILLY. That'll do, Philura. I'll take my chances.

PHILURA (*on porch*). Well, the saying is, no fool like an old fool. [EXIT *into house*.]

BESS. I can't thank you, sir——

BILLY. There—there, don't try. (*Puts his hands on her shoulders and looks into her face*) There's trouble writ in those eyes of yours but no guilt, I'll stake my word. (*BESS. goes towards house*)

CLYTIE (*comes down c.*). Oh, Bess., will you take the mutt in and introduce him to the family? (EXIT BESS. *smilingly, with dog into house. Sits on bench at well; to BILLY*) I reckon you'll fire me to-morrow.

BILLY. Why?

CLYTIE. 'Cause I git fired everywhere I go. Seems like nobody wants to put up with me.

BILLY. Are you that bad?

CLYTIE. I don't mean to be, but I guess I just can't help it.

BILLY. Haven't you got anybody belonging to you, at all?

CLYTIE. Nope, 'cept it's the mutt; I think him and me is related. Say, if I don't behave meself, just fire me, will you, but don't send Bess. away—just me and mutt.

BILLY. There, I don't reckon you're goin' to be so awful bad. Philura will be sendin' you to Sunday-school as soon as she puts some clothes on you.

CLYTIE. Sunday-school. Gee, I don't like that much.

BILLY. Yes, you will when you get used to it.

ENTER GRAHAM C. *from L. looks on until his cue.*

CLYTIE. Who's the teacher?

BILLY. The minister.

CLYTIE. Is he old and cross?

BILLY. No, he ain't more than a boy. We call him "The Little Minister," you'll like him, everybody does.

GRAHAM (*coming down L. c.*). Well, that's one time a listener heard good of himself.

BILLY. Speak of the angels, you'll hear the flapping of their wings. (*CLYTIE rises and remains R. c.*)

GRAHAM (*to CLYTIE*). Hello, I never saw *you* before.

CLYTIE. I never saw you, 'nuther.

GRAHAM. Who are you?

CLYTIE. I'm Clytie; who are you?

GRAHAM. Why, I'm the minister.

CLYTIE. So long. (*Starts toward house but BILLY*

catches her as she passes him and holds her with his arm around her shoulders)

GRAHAM. What's the matter?

CLYTIE. I'm skeered of ministers. (GRAHAM and BILLY *laugh*. To BILLY) You said you heard the flapping of his wings. He ain't got none.

GRAHAM (*at bench down L.*). Oh yes, I have, but they're hidden under my coat.

CLYTIE. You're a liar. (BILLY and GRAHAM *are shocked*. BILLY *puts his hand over CLYTIE'S mouth*) What's the matter?

BILLY. You mustn't call the minister anything like that.

CLYTIE. Well, he said he's got wings, and he ain't. Anybody what tells a lie like that is a liar—and a good one.

GRAHAM (*laughing*). I stand convicted, Clytie. But you haven't told me who you are, and where you came from.

BILLY. She's just a little wayfarer, minister, that drifted into our home. I'm going to adopt her, and make her one of the family.

GRAHAM. That's splendid, Mr. Larkins.

CLYTIE. And he's 'dopted Bess. and the mutt too.

GRAHAM. Who are they?

BILLY. Bess. is a young woman that came with her, another wayfarer like herself, and the mutt, as she calls him, well he's—

CLYTIE. He's just a mutt dat's all. (HEZ. *during the last line has wheeled the wheelbarrow on from UP R. and has reached C. when he sees CLYTIE. He leaves the barrow UP C. and comes down L. filled with curiosity. CLYTIE turns, sees HEZ. and moves toward BILLY*) W—hat's—that?

BILLY. Why, that's Hezekiah Green.

HEZ. (*taking off his cap*). Hezekiah Obadiah Hiram Green, de animal poet. (BILLY and CLYTIE *R. near house. GRAHAM at bench down L. HEZ. half up stage L. C.*)

CLYTIE (*looking at HEZ.*). Is it a human being? (BILLY *nods, she looks again at HEZ., then turns to BILLY*) My Gawd, ain't it awful. Was he born with that face, or did it just grow on him?

BILLY. Hez., go in and ask the strange young lady to come here a moment.

HEZ. Yes, sir. (*Starts towards house*)

BILLY. Go in the back way— You'll wear Philura's carpet out.

HEZ. Yes, sir. (*Turns and goes back of house*)

CLYTIE (*going half way to GRAHAM*). I think I'll like you.

GRAHAM (*meeting her and taking her hand*). I think I'll like you too; let's be friends. What do you say?

CLYTIE. Sure thing.

BILLY. Will you come in, minister?

GRAHAM. No, I was just passing. I must be home for dinner. I'll run over this evening though, and get better acquainted. (*BESSIE appears at door*)

BILLY. Yes, do. Here's Bessie, Clytie will make you acquainted. [EXIT *into house*.

ENTER BESSIE, *who comes down stage*.

CLYTIE. Bess., I'm goin' to introduce you to the minister. He's nice. I like him, and you got to like him too. Minister, dis is Bessie.

GRAHAM (*holds out his hand to BESS.*). I'm glad to know you, Miss——

BESS. (*taking his hand*). Lynn.

GRAHAM. My name is Graham. I hope you two will become members of my congregation, and I should like you to know my mother.

CLYTIE (D. R.). Gee, have you got a mother?

GRAHAM. Yes, the best mother in the world. Will you come to see her?

CLYTIE (*holding out her skirt*). What—in my Sunday-go-to-meetin's?

GRAHAM. You look very charming. (*He smiles and bows slightly*)

CLYTIE (*with a comedy bow*). Oh, t'anks.

GRAHAM. I will be over this evening. You won't let Miss Philura send you to bed before I come, will you?

CLYTIE. You can bet your bottom dollar I won't.

GRAHAM. Then I'll say, good-bye, for a little while. You will come to the service on Sunday, Miss Lynn?

BESS. Indeed I will, and Clytie will come too. (*CLYTIE nudges BESS. who turns and looks at her*)

GRAHAM (*to CLYTIE*). Oh, you will come all right. (*Goes up stage*)

CLYTIE (*as he reaches the gate*). Oh, minister.

GRAHAM. Yes?

CLYTIE. You won't be very late this evening will you?

GRAHAM. No, eight at the latest, be sure you're up.

CLYTIE. You can't lose me. [EXIT GRAHAM C. *going R.*

BESS. Come Clytie, Miss Philura will have work for us to

do. (CLYTIE comes down, BESS. puts her arm around her) Just think honey, we've found a home, not a room in a tenement, but a real home with good honest people. Oh, you haven't seen the nice airy rooms, the clean white beds, the big kitchen with all its shining pans and kettles and best of all, the beautiful sunlight, the fresh air, the dear little chickens, and birds, and everything—everything that our starved hearts have yearned for all these years. Aren't you happy Clytie?

CLYTIE. Yep, I fell just like me heart's goin' to bust.

BESS. To-night, honey, before we go to bed, I want you to kneel down with me and offer a little prayer of thanks for all the good things that have come to us to-day. Will you promise?

CLYTIE. Me pray?

BESS. Yes, Clytie.

CLYTIE. Well, it'll be pretty tough but I guess I kin do it.

BESS. Then come in, and let us try and find some work to do. (*Goes up on porch drawing CLYTIE by the hand*)

CLYTIE. Say, Bess., don't you think you'd better own up about that Hayward affair.

BESS. No, Clytie, that chapter of my life is closed—I never want to open it again.

CLYTIE. But the old man asked you—

BESS. And I told him my conscience was clear. So it is. I believed myself that man's wife.

CLYTIE. And you weren't at all?

BESS. No, it was just a farce, so that he could throw me aside when he grew tired.

CLYTIE. Well, don't say anything more about it. If you think it's right not to tell, then it must be right.

ENTER PHILURA from house with dinner-bell.

PHILURA. Go in, girls, dinner is ready. I'm going to ring for the farm hands. (*PHILURA goes up stage*)

CLYTIE. Say, Bess., ain't that minister a peach?

[EXIT CLYTIE and BESS. into house.]

PHILURA (*sees wheelbarrow*). Land sakes, there's that careless boy gone and left that wheelbarrow right in the middle of the path. Where in the world can he be? (*She stands in front of wheelbarrow and rings the dinner-bell.* HEZ. comes from behind house, picks up wheelbarrow, PHILURA falls into it, and he wheels her off behind house)

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE.—*Kitchen. Door R. C. in flat. Door R. U. E. and L. U. E. Broad-window L. flat, with muslin curtains. Table L. C. with cloth and dishes. Dresser up stage R. of door. Couch down R. Dishes on dresser. Chairs at table. Flowers on table.*

DISCOVERED EMMALINE *at window, looking off toward L. BESS. in the act of taking dishes from table; she goes once to dresser with dish, then returns to table, and is taking a second dish when EMMALINE turns from window.*

EMMA. Bessie, what are you doing?

BESS. Miss Philura told me to clear the table.

EMMA. Well, please let the things alone. She knows very well that Mr. Dudley hasn't had his supper.

BESS. (*replacing dish on table*). He is your boarder, Miss?

EMMA. (*coming down L.*). Yes, I suppose you would call him that, but he is a very dear friend besides.

BESS. (*at R. of table*). Oh, I thought he was a stranger here.

EMMA. He has been here two weeks.

BESS. (*smiling*). And that makes him a very dear friend?

EMMA. Friendship is not a matter of time. I liked him the moment I saw him.

BESS. Miss Philura doesn't seem to share your opinion of him?

EMMA. Oh, Aunt Philura doesn't like anything that resembles a man. But wait until you see him, Bessie.

BESS. (*smiling*). Is he so very handsome?

EMMA. I think so, but—then—I may be prejudiced—I like him so much.

BESS. Do you really? I hope he is worthy of you, dearie.

EMMA. *Worthy of me!* How silly you talk. Why he's a clever, cultured gentleman, a man of the world,—while I—well, I'm only a simple country girl.

BESS. (*takes EMMA's hand*). A simple country girl. And is there anything in the whole world that is better, sweeter or more innocent. Don't let your heart run away with you, girlie.

EMMA. What do you mean?

BESS. I am afraid that you are beginning to think more of this stranger than is good for you. Wait, Emmaline, wait until you know who and what he is.

EMMA. (*drawing her hand away*). Well! I think you are forgetting yourself.

BESS. Yes, you are right, I was forgetting. But I only wanted to warn you against making a serious mistake.

EMMA. A mistake, perhaps, that you've made yourself.

BESS. Perhaps.

EMMA. Well, I can take care of myself, thank you.

BESS. I'm glad to hear it.

ENTER PHILURA, R. U. E., *carrying a plate or cup and saucer, places it on dresser, glances down at table.*

PHILURA. Sakes alive, ain't that table cleared yet?

EMMA. I told Bessie not to put the things away until Mr. Dudley has his supper.

PHILURA. D'ye think I'm goin' to have that table set all hours waitin' till *he* gets good and ready to eat? No, sir, I won't have it—and that's all there is about it.

ENTER BILLY L. U. E. *carrying an unlighted lantern.*

BILLY. Great Fishhooks, what's all the racket about? Philura, no matter in which part of the house I go, back or front, upstairs or downstairs, I kin always hear your tongue.

PHILURA. My tongue's my own and I kin use it as much as I please.

BILLY. Well, you'd better save a little of it now and then, or by the time Josh Waterbury gets ye, there won't be any left.

PHILURA. Cat's foot! Don't you pester me with Josh Waterbury.

BILLY. What are ye mad about Philura?

PHILURA. I'm mad about that table—that's what.

BILLY. Why—what's the table doin' to you?

PHILURA. Table ain't doin' nuthin' to me. Don't talk like a driveling idiot. It's Emmaline; she won't let Bessie clear the things away.

BILLY. Why?

PHILURA. Because *Mister* Dudley ain't made up his mind to come home. If he wants his supper he ought to come for it when other folks has theirs.

EMMA. He went to town on business and is detained, that's all.

PHILURA. It's a funny business that nobody knows anything about. (*BESSIE goes up to dresser, appears to be engaged there but listens to what is being said*)

EMMA. It's *his* business, at any rate.

BILLY. Now Emmaline, that don't sound nice. You mustn't use that tone to Aunt Philura.

PHILURA (*puts corner of her apron to her eyes*). Yes, that's right—go ahead and abuse me; I'm only Aunt Philura, the household drudge, that *anybody* kin talk back to—

EMMA. (*puts arm around her*). Now, Auntie, I didn't mean to be nasty—please forgive me—I won't do it again.

PHILURA (*cries on EMMA'S shoulder*). You don't love me, Emmaline.

EMMA. Yes, I do, Aunt Philura; see, I'll do just as you tell me; I'm going to clear the table myself. (*Starts toward table*)

PHILURA (*draws her back*). No, don't touch it, Emmie; may be he'll be along soon.

EMMA. Are you sure you don't mind, Auntie?

PHILURA. Yes, I'm sure; I suppose people I *don't* like have to eat just as well as those I *do* like. There's some apple pie on the second shelf in the pantry for his dessert.

EMMA. Bessie will get it for me when he comes.

BILLY. Philura, where's the oil for my lantern? I got to go down to the barn to see that sick colt.

PHILURA. Heavens to Betsy—go fill your lantern yourself—have I got to wait on you every whipstitch?

BILL. Now, don't git flusterated, Philura; I only asked you where the oil was.

PHILURA. It's outside the kitchen door—where did ye think it was, on the parlor mantelpiece?

BILLY. Well, I don't keer much about Josh Waterbury—but he certainly has my sympathy. [EXIT R. U. E.]

PHILURA (*takes something from table as if about to throw it at BILLY as he exits, she replaces it. BESSIE laughs. PHILURA turns and sees her*). Well, what are you laughin' at, Miss? There's plenty for you to do besides standin' around lookin' pretty. Go out and see what Clytie is doing. She's a perfect imp for gettin' into mischief. (*DUDLEY heard off stage*) [EXIT BESS. R. U. E.]

EMMA. Oh, there's Mr. Dudley, now. (*Runs to window*)

PHILURA (*going up R. U. E.*). Well, you kin wait on him. I won't. [EXIT R. U. E.]

ENTER DUDLEY D. R. C.

EMMA. (*running to meet DUDLEY*). Goodness, you've been gone a long time. I thought you were never coming.

DUDLEY (*takes her hand as they come down*). I didn't mean to be so late, but the man I was to meet didn't show up on time and I waited in the hope of seeing him.

EMMA. Did he come at last?

DUDLEY. No, he didn't; I missed him altogether.

EMMA. Well, sit down and have supper; you must be almost starved. (*Goes up to dresser and brings food to table*)

DUDLEY. No, I'm not hungry. I had a bite in town at five o'clock.

EMMA. But it is nearly eight now; you must eat something after my having saved it for you.

DUDLEY (*sits at L. of table*). Well, just to please you.

PHILURA (*calls off R. U. E.*). Emmaline.

EMMA. What is it, Auntie?

PHILURA. Come here; I want you.

EMMA. (*to DUDLEY*). I'll be back in a few minutes.

[EXIT R. U. E.]

DUDLEY (*resting his elbow on table, his chin on hand, in thought*). Where the deuce was Watson. If he's taken a drink, I'll kill him.

PHILURA (*off stage*). Look here, Brother Billy, don't you go spillin' that ile all over my carpet.

ENTER BILLY R. U. E. *with lantern and oil-can.*

BILLY. All right, Philura, don't raise the roof off the house. (*Fixing his lantern. Sees DUDLEY*) Hello, Mr. Dudley, what's going on in town; heard anything new about the robbery?

DUDLEY. No; I stopped at the hotel and at the post-office, but no one seemed to be talking about it.

BILLY. You being a stranger in these parts I thought may be some of the town folks would be kind of quizzin' you about your business, and so on.

DUDLEY. No, no one spoke to me—excepting Mr. Waterbury; I met him just as I was starting back to the farm.

BILLY. Oh, is that so? Didn't know Josh went into town this afternoon; must have gone after he left here. Josh is constable you know.

DUDLEY. Yes, so I'd heard. Has he ever caught any one?

BILLY. Not yet, but while there's life there's hope.

DUDLEY (*laughs*). I don't suppose the gentleman who looted the bank need have any fear in that direction.

BILLY. Can't say. A blind hog sometimes finds an acorn,

you know. (ENTER JOSH D. R. C.) Hello, Josh, we were just talkin' about you.

JOSH. That so? Thought I heerd you say *hog*.

BILLY. So we did, but we meant you.

JOSH. Much obliged.

BILLY. Oh, I didn't mean it none disrespectful. You see, we was discussing the robbery. Any news from the front?

JOSH. Nary a news. I thought I had a clue this afternoon. There was a strange feller hangin' around the post-office that I didn't like the looks of. Nobody seemed to know who he was, or what he was doin' there. I watched him for a while, and then I went up and asked him his business—darned if I didn't.

BILLY. What did he say?

JOSH. Told me to go home, set down and let my hair grow. I told him that was contempt of court, and I had a good notion to get out a habeas corpus and arrest him.

BILLY. Did ye do it?

JOSH. Nope, I happened to think that in a case of this kind I'd have to have a writ of *hi-sak-a-lorum*, and that couldn't be did on a Friday.

DUDLEY. What are you talking about?

JOSH. I'm talkin' in the language of the court, sir; if you don't understand it, that's your affair.

DUDLEY. Do you understand all this, Mr. Larkins?

BILLY. Well, not exactly, but I reckon Josh does, and that's all that's necessary.

DUDLEY. What did the man you mention look like?

JOSH. He looked like a dissipated, drunken sot; if I'm not mistaken he was very close to havin' the delicious trimmins.

BILLY. It must have been the same one that was here this afternoon—

DUDLEY. Here!

BILLY. Cæsar's ghost—I'm as bad as Philura. I wasn't supposed to tell you—but he asked for you, Mr. Dudley.

DUDLEY. Did he say what he wanted?

BILLY. Well—I could *see* what he wanted was a good straight whiskey and I gave it to him. That man is going to go to pieces some day—he's a physical wreck.

DUDLEY. You shouldn't have given him anything to drink, Mr. Larkins. After he has one, he can't stop.

BILLY. He's a mighty peculiar partner for a man like you, Mr. Dudley.

DUDLEY. Did he say we were partners?

BILLY. That's what I understood.

DUDLEY. He didn't know what he talking about. He's simply a hanger-on; I throw him a bit of work occasionally and pay him for it. But that's getting away from the subject we were discussing—the bank robbery.

JOSH. Jumpin' beeswax, it makes me mad when I think of it. Nine hundred dollars swept clear and clean, and not even a toothpick left behind as a clue. (BILLY *laughs, as he arranges lantern*) Oh, you kin laugh, kin ye—'cause you happened to have horse sense enough to keep your money to hum.

BILLY. All you smart Alecks have been grinnin' at me behind my back, 'cause I didn't use your wonderful burglar-proof bank. Well, now, it's my turn to laugh, gol darn it, and I'm goin' to have it out, if I bust.

JOSH. Well, ye needn't laugh yerself to death, gol dang ye!

DUDLEY. How much did *you* lose, Mr. Waterbury?

JOSH. Four dollars and ninety-seven cents, b'gosh; I'd bin savin' that up for two years, and then to think some slick-handed thief has got it.

DUDLEY. Too bad. It must have been a blow to lose all that money at one time—but if you will allow me to say so, you're a good loser—why, you're not even crying about it.

BILLY (*laughing*). He's darn near it.

JOSH. Laugh—gol darn ye—laugh!

DUDLEY. I understand you didn't use the bank, Mr. Larkins.

BILLY. No, siree—I kept mine to home and consequently I didn't lose a dollar.

DUDLEY. I haven't seen anything looking like a safe around here.

BILLY. Oh, I don't keep it where you kin see it. I got a little room at the top of the house that ain't been used for a good many years—except as a sort of safe deposit for my money.

JOSH. That was Margaret's room.

BILLY. Yes.

DUDLEY. Who is Margaret?

BILLY. She *was* my daughter.

DUDLEY. She is dead?

BILLY. Yes—we never speak of her except when some

long-eared jackass mentions her name. (*Glances angrily at JOSH.*)

JOSH. Now I'm a jackass; a little while ago I was a hog; first thing you know, Hez. will be writin' po'try about me.

BILLY. Well, Josh, I'm goin' down to the barn—want to come along?

JOSH. Well—er—I did expect to see Philura—

BILLY. She ain't goin' to run away before you get back. Come along. [EXIT D. R. C.]

JOSH (*at door—looking at DUDLEY*). Speaking *sine quinini*—that feller needs watchin'. [EXIT D. R. C.]

DUDLEY (*sitting at table L.*). So, that's how I came to miss Watson—he's had a drink and consequently lost his head. Coming to this place when I expressly told him to stay away; and then making himself conspicuous around the post-office. Now that we've missed each other he'll probably be coming back here.

ENTER EMMA. R. U. E. *Comes to R. of table.*

EMMA. Why, you have hardly eaten a thing.

DUDLEY. I couldn't; I told you I wasn't hungry.

EMMA. (*sits at table*). I've told Bessie to bring in your dessert; then I'll let you off.

DUDLEY. Who is Bessie?

EMMA. A young woman we have taken in to help with the housework. (ENTER BESSIE R. U. E., *carring a plate with slice of pie; goes down stage to EMMA.'s chair, as EMMA. is speaking*) Now, I hope we shall have less of Auntie's complaints about the awful amount of work there is in this house. (BESSIE *has reached the table, recognizes DUDLEY, just as DUDLEY raises his eyes and recognizes her. He seems startled but controls himself; BESSIE drops the plate and grasps back of EMMA.'s chair. EMMA. looks around at her with surprise, rises*) Why, Bessie, what's the matter? See what you've done.

BESS. I'm sorry.

EMMA. (*looking at her*). Are you ill?

BESS. Yes—will you excuse me—

EMMA. (*taking her hand*). Of course I will. Why, how cold your hand is. Go out in the air, and don't come back into this warm room. (*Going up to R. U. E. with BESSIE*) Let Clytie finish the supper dishes. (EMMA. *returns down stage*) [EXIT BESSIE R. U. E. *glancing back at DUDLEY.*]

DUDLEY. So that is your new help. She doesn't look very capable.

EMMA. No; wasn't it awkward of her to do such a thing. (*Picks up dish—places it on table*) The sight of you seemed to startle her, did you notice?

DUDLEY. Not particularly. I see she has robbed me of my dessert.

EMMA. Yes, it's too bad. There isn't any more.

DUDLEY. No, matter. I'm just aching for a smoke. If you don't mind, I'll light up outside.

EMMA. You may smoke in here.

DUDLEY. And have Miss Philura looking daggers at me? Not much. (*Taking EMMA'S arm in his*) I have a confession to make to you.

EMMA. Yes—what is it?

DUDLEY. Your Aunt Philura is the only woman in the world I'm afraid of.

EMMA. (*laughing*). Nonsense. If you like, I'll keep you company on the porch while you smoke.

DUDLEY. Nothing would please me better. There are two cosy rockers out there and just enough moonlight to make it interesting.

EMMA. And will you tell me some stories?

DUDLEY. What kind?

EMMA. Oh, any kind.

DUDLEY (*close to her, and looking into her face*). There's one I'd like to tell you, if I thought you'd listen.

EMMA. (*softly*). What is it?

DUDLEY (*takes her arm and leads her up to L. U. E.*). I can tell it better in the moonlight.

[EXIT L. U. E. *apparently chatting.*

ENTER CLYTIE R. U. E. *with broom and the dog.*

CLYTIE. Now, look here, mutt, I done sneaked you out of de woodshed, but if Miss Philura sets eyes on you, it's all up wid ye, d'ye hear? You wants to keep mighty quiet—don't talk unless you has to—if you got anything to say, whisper it. And yer's another piece of advice I want to impress on you. Don't snitch anything. If you want a thing, ask for it like a gentleman—but *don't snitch.*

ENTER PHILURA R. U. E. *Puts dish-pan with water on dresser.*

PHILURA. You Clytie—didn't I tell you to leave that dog

where I put him—the house is no place for him—give him to me.

CLYTIE. Aw, Miss Philura—he ain't goin'—a——

PHILURA. Don't talk back—give him to me this instant—

CLYTIE (*giving the dog to PHILURA*). Back to de woodshed, mutt; dat's what ye get for being a dog. I'll come and see you before I go to bed, ye hear?

PHILURA. Now, you go to work and straighten up this room. It's a sight to behold. [EXIT R. U. E.]

CLYTIE. Gee—dis has been a day all right. I never learned to do so many things in one day in my life. Feed the chickens, milk the cow, wash the dishes, make beds, sweep the floor, peel vegetables,—gee, dere ain't no end to 'em. (*During this speech she is sweeping and dusting—sweeps table with broom, sweeps dust under corner of rug, throws papers, a hat or any article handy, under the couch down R., etc.*) I bet Miss Philura don't rest one minute the whole day and she don't let anybody else rest. “Heavens to Betsey, Clytie, ain't you got them dishes washed yet.” So long, Mary. If I ever live to be an old maid like Miss Philura, I hope somebody kindly but firmly leads me to some quiet spot and shoots me. Here goes to get dis room in shape; if she only keeps her nose out of here I think I can do this job to the queen's taste. (*Hums a bit of song—while she works*) Now I got to wash the supper dishes—or what's left of 'em. (*CLYTIE brings pan of hot-water down to table, begins to put dishes in it*) I wonder where that minister is, he said he'd be here at eight o'clock and it's later than that now. He don't look like a minister. The only ones I ever saw looked solemn as owls, and dey took life awful miserable. He couldn't look solemn if he tried because his eyes are laughing all the time. (ENTER GRAHAM D. R. C.) I wonder if you'd have to be awful good to be a minister's wife. (*Puts her hand in hot water—quickly withdraws it*) D—— that water—it's hot.

GRAHAM (*comes down R. C.*). Clytie; What was that?

CLYTIE. Hello—did you hear it? Want me to say it again?

GRAHAM. No. I am surprised.

CLYTIE. Well, just put your hand in this water and you won't be surprised a bit.

GRAHAM. What was that you were saying when I entered?

CLYTIE. I wasn't sayin' anything. (*Washes dishes—messes things generally*)

GRAHAM. Yes, you were; something about a minister's wife, wasn't it?

CLYTIE. Oh—I guess I was just wonderin' if you were married.

GRAHAM (*sits R.*). Well, I'm not. I've never met anyone I wanted to marry.

CLYTIE. Guess you're hard to please, ain't you?

GRAHAM. No, I don't think so. Just haven't met the right one, that's all. My mother says I'll probably marry someone totally unfitted for the position.

CLYTIE. Would she have to be awfully good?

GRAHAM. Well—fairly so.

CLYTIE. And terribly religious?

GRAHAM. Well, I shouldn't want her to be overburdened in that respect.

CLYTIE. She couldn't cuss, could she?

GRAHAM. Mercy! No.

CLYTIE. And she'd have to go to church every Sunday?

GRAHAM. Yes.

CLYTIE. And say her prayers ever day?

GRAHAM. Certainly.

CLYTIE. And every night?

GRAHAM. And every night.

CLYTIE. And have to be kind and polite to everybody?

GRAHAM. Yes.

CLYTIE. And forgive her enemies even if she hated 'em?

GRAHAM. Yes.

CLYTIE. Well, you can count me out; I don't want the job.

GRAHAM (*laughing*). Were you considering it?

CLYTIE. Well, I was just wondering how it would feel to—be so darn good.

GRAHAM. And you don't think you could manage it?

CLYTIE. Not unless I had a change of heart.

GRAHAM. Stranger things than that have happened. (*Goes over to table*) Clytie, you've never had a day's training in your life, have you?

CLYTIE. Only what I picked up meself.

GRAHAM. You don't remember anything of your parents?

CLYTIE. D'ye think I ever had any?

GRAHAM. Well—most of us have.

CLYTIE. Mine must have died before I was born. I don't remember a thing about 'em. The old woman that half raised me told me she wasn't my mother. She found me outside a saloon door when I wasn't more than able to walk.

She said when she picked me up, I pointed to the door and cried; she opened the door and looked in, but there wasn't anybody there but a drunken bum begging the barkeeper for a drink. She didn't think I belonged to him so she took me home with her—and I never knew any other mother.

GRAHAM. Was she good to you?

CLYTIE. When she was sober, but that was so seldom I can hardly remember the times. When she was drunk she was a son-of-a-gun.

GRAHAM. Clytie, I've a proposition to make to you.

CLYTIE. What's a proposition?

GRAHAM. An offer—a plan—a scheme for your benefit.

CLYTIE. Put me next.

GRAHAM. I think it's a crying shame that a girl like you has never had a chance. I think God has directed your footsteps to this place, and He has given me a great opportunity to do a splendid thing. But I can't do it without your help.

CLYTIE. Tell me what it is. I'm on the job all right.

GRAHAM. The job is the making of an untrained, uneducated, but dear little girl, into a fine, cultured woman.

CLYTIE. You don't mean me, do you?

GRAHAM. I mean you, Clytie.

CLYTIE. Do you think it can be did?

GRAHAM. Can be done.

CLYTIE. Can be d—done?

GRAHAM. If you will try very hard. My mother wants to help. I've been telling her about you, and she's very anxious to take you in hand; that is if uncle Billy agrees to it.

CLYTIE. Miss Philura said she was goin' to send me to school.

GRAHAM. But school doesn't open until September; besides you would not make much headway there. I want you to begin immediately, and I haven't seen mother so keen about anything for a long while. You'll love my mother, Clytie.

CLYTIE. If she's anything like you, you can gamble on it.

GRAHAM. So, it's a bargain, is it? (*Holding out his hand*)

CLYTIE. You bet it is. I'll work like——

GRAHAM (*stopping her*). Ah!

CLYTIE. Forty. (*Takes hand out of water, clasps GRAHAM'S hand*)

GRAHAM (*drawing away his hand*). Oh, Clytie, your hand was full of dishwater.

CLYTIE. Here. Dry it on my apron. (*Holds end of apron. GRAHAM wipes his hand*)

GRAHAM. I'm coming over the first thing in the morning to arrange with uncle Billy. I don't want you to lose a day. (*Places his hands on her shoulders. Speaks earnestly*)

CLYTIE. I don't want to lose a minute.

GRAHAM. I'm going to like you very much, Clytie.

CLYTIE. I'm going to like you like thunder.

ENTER HEZ. D. R. C. *Glances at GRAHAM and CLYTIE.*

HEZ. Excuse me if I'm interruptin' anything.

GRAHAM (*turning*). Oh, it's the animal poet. You needn't apologize, Hez., a genius has a perfect right to interrupt anything. I'll see you to-morrow, Clytie. In the meantime I'm going to leave you a little book of poems that was a favorite of mine when I was a youngster.

HEZ. Poems? Have I got a rival?

GRAHAM. Just a fellow named Longfellow, Hez. You need not get nervous. He couldn't attempt the sort of stuff you put out. Good-night, little girl, be good until I see you again.

CLYTIE. Good-night, minister. Gee—ain't he a peach.

[EXIT GRAHAM D. R. C.]

HEZ. Longfellow. Huh. He couldn't have been much good. I never heard of him.

ENTER PHILURA R. U. E.

PHILURA. What are you doing over here this time of night, Hez. Green?

HEZ. Oh, Miss Philura, me mother says will you please'm lend her your bread pans.

PHILURA. My bread pans! So, she's goin' to bake, is she?

HEZ. No'm, she's goin' to hitch a horse to 'em and take a drive.

PHILURA. Well, what your mother don't borrow, you come over here and break. Come get the bread pans and then go home.

HEZ. I got to see the sheriff; got a message for him.

PHILURA. Well, he's down in the barn with brother Billy. Who's the message from?

HEZ. From the Chief at Warrentville.

PHILURA. Well, tell it to me and I'll tell Josh.

HEZ. No, can't tell it to a woman, it's a secret.

ENTER JOSH and BILLY D. R. C.

BILLY. Well, don't tell it to Philura.

PHILURA. Now, Brother Billy—

BILLY (*puts his arm in hers and takes her off R. U. E.*).
Oh, come along and stop your cacklin'.

[EXIT *chatting* R. U. E.]

HEZ. (*mysteriously*). S-sh— (*Beckons to JOSH.*)

JOSH. What's the matter, Hez? Another poetic fit comin' on?

HEZ. Got a message for you.

JOSH. A message for *me*.

HEZ. S-sh—not so loud; somebody might be listenin'.

JOSH (*mysteriously*). Is it important? Who's it from?

HEZ. From the Chief.

JOSH. Of Police?

HEZ. Yes.

JOSH. What's he say? (*Business of HEZ. and JOSH looking at doors, etc. to see that no one overhears*)

HEZ. He says to come at once. They've found out something important.

JOSH. And they send for *me*. Shows what they think of me, don't it? When anything *BIG* turns up, they send for Josh Waterbury. Do you know what it is, Hez.?

HEZ. Yep; I overheard it; but I ain't supposed to tell.

JOSH. You'll tell *me*, Hez., won't you? I was always a friend of yours, Hez.; and when I'm chief of police I'll make you a cornstawble.

HEZ. Dat's too far off. Gimme a nickel.

JOSH. Is it worth as much as that, Hez.?

HEZ. It's worth a quarter.

JOSH. It must be something great.

HEZ. Oh, you'll be tickled to death when you hear it.

JOSH. You know, Hez., it's contempt of court to keep anything from the cornstawble. I could send you to penitentiary for life for an offense like that. You'd better tell.

HEZ. Gimme the nickel.

JOSH (*reluctantly gives nickel*). There 'tis. I was saving that to start a new bank account,—but I give it to you freely. (*Kisses nickel good-bye*)

HEZ. Well, the chief has just discovered how to capture the bank thief.

JOSH. Yew don't say. And they want my help.

HEZ. No, they're goin' to lock you up till the thief is caught.

JOSH. What!

HEZ. Yep. Chief says while you're loose there's no hope of a capture.

JOSH. And you made me pay a nickel for that, gol darn ye—it ain't worth a penny. [EXIT D. R. C.]

HEZ. (*bites nickel*). Neither's your nickel, it's got a hole in it. I'll put that in the contribution box next Sunday. (*Knock heard on D. R. C.*) Come in.

ENTER WATSON D. R. C.

WATSON. I'm looking for Mr. Dudley, can you tell me where he is?

HEZ. Out on the front porch, didn't ye see him?

WATSON. I came the other way.

HEZ. I'll go tell him if ye want me to.

WATSON (*down R.*). Yes, I wish you would. (EXIT HEZ. L. U. E.) He'll jump on me for coming here, I suppose. Well, let him. He's got to treat me decently. I'm good enough while the work is being done, but after he once gets his hands on the money, he kicks me aside like a dog. I wonder what his game is hanging around this place, there's nothing to be gained by it, and it's dangerous. There must be a woman in the case. Money and women are the only things he is ever interested in; he's got the money— (ENTER DUDLEY and EMMA. L. U. E. WATSON looks at EMMA) Ah, I thought so.

DUDLEY (*to EMMA. After a glance at WATSON*). Will you pardon me if I ask you to leave me alone with this man, Miss Emma?

EMMA. Certainly.

[EXIT R. U. E. after glancing at the two men.]

WATSON (*glances after her, then to DUDLEY*). At the same old game, I see.

DUDLEY. None of that! What are you doing here?

WATSON. I came for what belongs to me; my part of the Warrentville money.

DUDLEY (*grasps him by the throat*). You blundering idiot. (*Releases him*) Didn't I warn you to stay away from this house?

WATSON. I had to come; you've left me without a dollar. I'm as anxious to get away from here as you are to have me go.

DUDLEY. You've been drinking—where did you get the liquor?

WATSON. Some fellows at the hotel treated me.

DUDLEY. Who were they?

WATSON. I don't know; they struck up a conversation with me and invited me to join in the drinks. May be they were drummers.

DUDLEY. Yes, and may be they were officers. You begged the first drink this afternoon from old man Larkins.

WATSON. See here, Dudley, why didn't you tell me the name of these people was Larkins.

DUDLEY. Why should I? Nothing remarkable about it.

WATSON. It was the name of the girl I married, whose young life I ruined, whose baby I lost in the streets.

DUDLEY. Oh, that's ancient history.

WATSON. To you, yes; but to me it is always present. It is like a weight on my heart that I carry with me always; in my sleep I seem to hear her voice; in my drunken dreams I see her with her arms outstretched, asking what I've done with her child—always asking—always pleading—and I can't answer—God help me—I can't answer. (*Sits in chair, buries his head in his hands*)

DUDLEY (*shakes him*). Here, brace up—don't go to pieces here; it isn't likely that these are the same people. Larkins is a common name; besides, that story is seventeen years old and forgotten by everyone but yourself.

WATSON. How can I forget. Think of it, Dudley, she made me swear on her dying bed that I'd keep straight for the little girl's sake—and only a week after she was in her grave I lost the little one in the streets; she wandered away while I went in search of whiskey.

DUDLEY. Well, she was probably picked up by someone who has taken better care of her than you would have done. See here, Watson, we've worked together a good many years, and we've pulled off some first rate jobs. You were all right at the start off, but you've gradually allowed drink to become your master, until now you're not much good to me or yourself. I've been thinking that it's about time to cry quits.

WATSON (*raising his head, and looking at DUDLEY*). You mean—

DUDLEY. That I'm done with you. Yes. You've lost your nerve, you can't be depended upon, and I'm through with you.

WATSON. So, it's come. I'm not even good enough to be a thief. Will you give me money to get away?

DUDLEY. Yes, and I want you to go to-night. Just to show you that I want to play square, I'll put you next to a little job you can pull off for yourself, to-night before you go.

WATSON. I'm not in condition.

DUDLEY. You don't have to be. It's easy. This old cove didn't use the Warrenville bank, but kept his savings in the little attic room at the top of the house; he kindly told me so to-night. The room is unoccupied and can be entered easily from the outside. I don't think he has a safe; the money is probably tied up and stuck in the corner of a bureau drawer, or some such place. It would be just like the old hayseed. I don't know how much it is, but it's probably worth going after. Come back here to-night after they've retired, relieve the old gentleman of his cash, and then get away by the midnight train. Now, there's the proposition. Take it or leave it, just as you like.

WATSON. There's no danger?

DUDLEY (*laughs*). Not a particle. (*Takes money from pocket*) Here is your third. (*Hands WATSON some bills*)

WATSON (*after thinking*). I'll take it. I'll need it if you are going to throw me over.

DUDLEY. I'm glad you're sensible. Now, make yourself as scarce as possible until the house is dark. I won't see you again, so good-bye and good-luck. (*Holds out hand*)

WATSON. Good-bye, Dudley. (*Takes his hand*) Will you let me say a word to you?

DUDLEY. What is it?

WATSON. Don't spoil that young girl's life for your own amusement. (*Nods in direction of EMMALINE*) It's only a pastime for you, I know, but it ain't a square deal for the girl.

DUDLEY. You're a nice one to preach, ain't you? When I feel the need of a sermon, I'll go to someone in a position to hand it to me.

WATSON. I guess you're right. I'm not the one to preach. I've forfeited all my rights as a man. I'm not even good enough to try to save a helpless girl.

DUDLEY. By Gad, I'm glad I decided to drop you. You're getting so squeamish and womanish you ain't worth your salt. You had better take my tip and hitch up to another good partner—if you can find one that will have you. The first job you tackle on your own hook you'll make a mess of.

WATSON. I'll try my hand to-night in the little room upstairs.

DUDLEY. Oh, that's not a real job, that's a cinch. If I considered it worth while, I wouldn't turn it over to *you*. Now go, Watson, remember you are not to see me again, and for your own sake, don't take any more liquor. You're in bad shape now.

WATSON. Drink is the only friend I've got, it's the only thing that sticks to me, we're not partners now, Dudley, so I'll drink as much as I like. (*Goes up stage*)

DUDLEY. Good. Do as you please. I'm glad I'm done with you.

WATSON (*at D. R. C.*). I'm sorry I ever began with you.

[EXIT D. R. C.]

DUDLEY (*shrugs shoulders*). Huh. That's gratitude for you. Picked him out of the gutter and made a nice, clever thief of him and that's the thanks I get. He'll get the old man's little money box to-night and clear out. I'll be rid of him. I wish it were as easy to be rid of Bess. What in the name of heaven sent her across my path again, and here of all places. I'll have to think out a scheme; a few choice lies; an insinuation or two in regard to her; the old man is a strict old Puritan; he won't have her in the house; it wouldn't be a bad idea to direct suspicion toward her when the loss of the money is discovered. Oh, it will pan out all right. The devil takes care of his own. (*Goes up as if to EXIT at L. U. E. BESSIE appears R. U. E.*)

BESS. Stop!

DUDLEY (*turns—looks at her*). Eh?

ENTER BESSIE R. U. E. and comes down c.

BESS. I want a few words with you.

DUDLEY (*comes down c.*). A dozen if you like. To tell the truth I was wishing for an interview myself. Would you mind telling me why you followed me here?

BESS. I didn't follow you. I would put the width of the world between us if I could.

DUDLEY. You must leave here to-morrow.

BESS. I am not taking orders from you. I have found a home here; you shall not drive me from it.

DUDLEY. I have only to say the word, and they will drive you from their door.

BESS. Say it then, but let it be the truth. Don't neglect

to tell them how you tricked an unsuspecting girl, and then left her to face the world alone.

DUDLEY. On what terms will you go away?

BESS. None—of your making.

DUDLEY. If I promise to make it worth your while.

BESS. I want none of your promises; I know too well what they are worth.

DUDLEY. I can force you.

BESS. Try it. Say one word against me to these people, and I will tell them what you are.

DUDLEY. One of us must leave here.

BESS. Then it shall be you. I sought this interview purposely to warn you that I intend to interfere in the game you are playing—

DUDLEY. You mean—

BESS. Your attentions to Emmaline.

DUDLEY. Jealous, eh?

BESS. No, I detest you too much for that. If I were a man and you even so much as looked at a sister of mine I should kill you like the dog you are.

DUDLEY. Be careful—

BESS. I'm not afraid of you—you coward, you thief, you convict—

DUDLEY. Damn you—I'll stop that tongue of yours.
(Grasps BESSIE by the throat)

ENTER CLYTIE D. R. C. *with dog.*

CLYTIE. Bessie.

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE.—*The attic room. Door R. U. E. Low window c. in rear flat. Small wooden bedstead L. with head pointing L. Steamer trunk on floor behind head of bed. Old wardrobe containing a few dresses up L. against flat. Old bureau down R. with articles of clothing, etc. in drawer, and a few articles, such as comb-tray, toilet articles on top. Chair R. Lights down. Moonlight coming through window, slanting from R. to L. When*

curtain is well up, ENTER R. U. E. PHILURA carrying gingham dress, BESSIE carrying small oil lamp, lighted, and CLYTIE with dog. Lights half up.

PHILURA. Now, Clytie, you are to sleep here to-night because there is not room in Emmaline's bed for the three of you. Bessie must sleep with Emmaline to-night, but to-morrow, if you say so, I'll put a larger bed in this room so that you two can be together.

BESS. (*places lamp on bureau. Glances around*). This is a dear little room. Don't you like it, Clytie?

CLYTIE. Yep, I feel as if I belonged here already. Didn't anybody use it before we came?

PHILURA. Not for a good many years. It was my niece's, and Brother Billy could never bear to see anyone else in it. It surprised me that he turned it over to you.

BESS. It was very good of him.

PHILURA (*looking at CLYTIE*). Clytie, ever since I set eyes on you this afternoon, I've been puzzling my brain to remember who it was you reminded me of. Now, I know.

CLYTIE. Who is it, Miss Philura?

PHILURA. My niece, Margaret.

BESS. Mr. Larkins' daughter?

PHILURA. Yes, the one I've just been telling you about.

CLYTIE. Tell us more about her, won't you?

PHILURA. Well, Brother Billy doesn't like me to even so much as mention her name. He idolized her as a girl and it almost killed him when she left home and married against his wishes.

BESS. It turned out badly?

PHILURA. Terrible. Within a year she wanted to come home, but Brother Billy refused. She died shortly after that and he has never forgiven himself for his cruelty.

BESS. He doesn't look like a cruel man.

PHILURA. It was the only cruel thing he ever did in his life, and he has suffered for it. (*Opens wardrobe*) See, here are some of her clothes just as she left them. I am going to ask Brother Billy to let me make them over for you, Clytie.

BESS. Doesn't any one ever come in here?

PHILURA. Well, of course I sneak in and dust things once in a while, but I don't let him catch me at it. Now, Clytie, here is that old frock of Emmaline's that I've fixed over for you to wear to-morrow. (*Puts dress on bed*) I hope it fits, but you fidgeted so while I was trying it on——

CLYTIE. Well, you stuck pins in me. (*Points to trunk*)
Whose trunk is that?

PHILURA. That belonged to Margaret too. Some of her things are packed away in it. Now, don't you begin to ask questions this time of night; it's time you were in bed. Come, Bessie, Emmaline is waiting for you. Clytie, give me that dog; you ain't expectin' to sleep with him, are ye?

CLYTIE. Aw, Miss Philura, let me put him at the foot of the bed, he ain't used to being by himself.

PHILURA. Well, he'll have to get used to it. You sneaked him in when I wasn't looking, didn't you? Well, back he goes to the woodshed.

CLYTIE. Good-night, mutt; I done my best for you, but it didn't work.

PHILURA (*takes dog*). Come along, Bessie.

BESS. I'll come in a minute, Miss Philura.

PHILURA. Clytie, don't forget to turn down that light before you go to bed. [EXIT R. U. E.]

BESS. You're not afraid to be alone, are you, Clytie?

CLYTIE. 'Fraid nuthin'. I remember the time I slept on somebody's doorstep all night, and I wasn't skeered.

BESS. You poor kid. Well, that will never happen again, I hope.

CLYTIE. Is old stick-in-the-mud gone?

BESS. Miss Philura? Yes—but you mustn't call her names, honey; because she has been very good to us.

CLYTIE (*sitting on bed*). That ain't callin' names. I was afraid she wasn't going to give us a chance to talk. Say, Bess., what are you going to do about Heyward—or Dudley as he calls himself now?

BESS (*sitting on bed*). I don't know what to do. To warn these good people against him I must dig up my own past and God knows how hard I've been trying to live it down.

CLYTIE. Do you think he'll tell?

BESS. He won't tell the truth, you may depend on that; but he will probably try to poison the old man's mind against me.

CLYTIE. What is he doing here anyhow?

BESS. Amusing himself with Emmaline for one thing, but I'll wager there is another reason for his presence here. I wonder what it can be.

CLYTIE. Did you know that the Warrenville bank was robbed last night?

BESS. No, who told you?

CLYTIE. I heard them talking about it.

BESS. Then you may be sure he had a hand in it. It is just like his impudence to remain here. He is probably laughing at them up his sleeve.

CLYTIE. Shall we tell?

BESS. We have no proofs, you know. Of course he will deny any charge we make, and these people will believe him in preference to us. They know him as Mr. Dudley, the gentleman; we know him as Heyward, the thief. (*Rising*) But I mustn't keep you up any longer. Miss Philura will be coming after me.

CLYTIE. Gee—I wish it was morning, I ain't a bit sleepy.

BESS. You will be presently. Shall I sing something for you?

CLYTIE. Yes, will you?

BESS. What shall it be? (*Sits at foot of bed.*)

CLYTIE. My Rosary. (*Or any convenient song. Song can be omitted. BESSIE sings.*)

BESS. (*rising*). Now, I must be going. Good-night, Clytie; pleasant dreams. Go to bed right away.

[EXIT R. U. E.]

CLYTIE (*takes off apron*). I don't want to go to bed. (*Opens wardrobe to hang apron up*) Look at all the pretty dresses. (*Takes white dress off hook*) I'd like to have this one. Believe I'll try it on and see how I look. (*Ad. lib. business of investigating room*) Wonder what's in that trunk over there. (*Glances toward door, then starts to trunk*) Got to find out—that's all there is about it. (*Opens trunk*) Whew. More clothes—and ribbons—gee, I never had a ribbon in my life—going to have one now though. (*Takes out ribbon*) And books. (*Opens book reads*) To Margaret Larkins, on her eighteenth birthday. And here's a photograph—its got writin' on too. (*Reads*) To Dad, your loving daughter, Margaret, Boston, 1892. Must have been away when she had this tooken—I mean taken. And she's got that white dress on too—the very same—and a bow of ribbon in her hair. Gee, she's got curls just like mine. Wonder how I'd look fixed up like that. (*Getting up*) I'm going to see. (*Puts photo on bureau, and begins to make up like the picture*) I'll fix my hair that way, first. (*Business pinning curls back and putting ribbon in hair*) That's beginning to look something like it. Now, for the dress. (*Slips out of her ragged dress, puts on white dress*) This thing is buttoned up the back—that's style for you, all right

—I guess I can manage it. (*Looks in glass*) My, I look a lot like that picture. Going to see what else is in the trunk—there's a whole lot of things at the bottom of it. (*Puts lamp behind head of bed, and sits on floor beside the trunk. Finds a book—is looking through it*)

WATSON (*appears at window, softly ENTERS, shows evidence of slight exertion*). That short climb was too much for me. Dudley knew when to throw me over, I'm going to pieces. I couldn't tackle a decent job. (*Looks at outstretched hand trembling*) My nerves are unstrung, I'm a wreck. I ought to put a bullet in my brain and end it all, but I haven't the courage even for that. (*Glances around*) I wonder where old Larkins keeps his money. I'll try the bureau first. (*Opens drawer softly, handles contents*) Nothing here. (*Opens second drawer. Same business. Impatiently*) No. Dudley was wrong, he must keep it somewhere else. (*Opens a third drawer. CLYTIE makes a slight move. WATSON starts. He whispers*) What was that! (*Holds position and listens a second. Shrugs his shoulders*) Just my fancy, I suppose. I thought there— (*Opens a small box on bureau; moves articles about, looking into things until he comes to photograph. He pauses and stares at it—then very slowly reaches out his hand and takes it up, looking at it closer—begins to wonder how it came there—whispers*) Margaret, my wife! Here! Then I was right—this was her home—and I have come—a thief in the night—to rob it, as if I hadn't robbed it of enough already. I ruined your life, girl; I dragged you down to the gutter, I brought you only misery, unhappiness and disgrace; I made your life a hell on earth and sent you to an early grave; I lost your baby in the streets, a little innocent child astray in a great city; all these years she's been a wanderer—an outcast—knowing neither father or mother—perhaps living on the charity of strangers. Margaret, can you forgive me—God knows I've suffered. (*Falls sobbing on his knees before bureau, placing photograph back on bureau. CLYTIE has heard someone in room, comes softly from behind bed, stands in the ray of moonlight, looking spellbound at WATSON. She doesn't move until curtain. WATSON raises his head; looks at photo*) I'm going, girl. I've done enough to you and to yours—I won't add another crime. (*Turns and sees CLYTIE. Pause*) Margaret! You here! You've come back to curse me! Ah, don't, don't. Can't you see what a wreck I am. I've suffered the torments of hell! Don't curse me, Margaret,

don't, curse me—don't—don't— (*Voice trails off into unconsciousness as he falls face downward on floor*)

CURTAIN.

(*For second curtain. WATSON in same position. CLYTIE kneeling by his side, bending over him.*)

ACT IV.

SCENE.—*Same as ACT II. ENTER JOSH R. C., glances around, then beckons to HEZ. outside. HEZ. ENTERS. JOSH steps softly, to D. R. U. E. and HEZ. to door L. U. E., listen for an instant, then come softly down c.*

JOSH. You see, Hez., we've got to use caution. Billy said there was something goin' on here that he didn't quite understand, but it looked suspicious; so he sent for me to be on hand in case of an arrest.

HEZ. Well, what do you want me for?

JOSH. This looks like a dangerous case, and I've got to have assistance, so I brought you along to *daputize* you.

HEZ. You don't have to; me mudder *had* me baptized.

JOSH. I said *daputize*. You're to be my deputy. I'll do it accordin' to law. Hold up your hands.

HEZ. (*raises his hands, then lowers them quickly*). Wait a minute! (*Changes his dollar watch from his vest to hip pocket, buttons up his coat*) Now, go ahead!

JOSH. As cornstawble of Warren County, I *daputize* you, Hez. Green—

HEZ. De Animal Poet—

JOSH. To assist me in the capture of the man known to us as Frank Dudley. Now, you're a deputy *boney fido*.

HEZ. Boney fido—what's that?

JOSH. That's Latin.

HEZ. Must be dog Latin.

ENTER BILLY R. U. E.

BILLY. Well, Josh, you got my message, did you?

JOSH. Yep—that's why I'm here. What's all this about, Billy?

BILLY. That's what I'm tryin' to find out, Josh. You

remember the drunken fellow we were talkin' about yesterday?

JOSH. Yep, the one I spoke to in town.

BILLY. The same. Well, he was found unconscious last night in the little room upstairs.

JOSH. Jumpin' Jupiter, this begins to look serious. Hez., I think I'll need your assistance.

BILLY. What's Hez. got to do with it?

HEZ. I'm Boney Fido!

BILLY. Well, Fido's place is outside.

JOSH. Yes, it might look suspicious, Hez., to see us two together. You take your post on the outside while I remain within.

HEZ. You mean the gate post?

JOSH. Do I mean the gate post? Did you ever see such intelligence in your life, Billy. It's wonderful. (*To Hez.*) No, don't take the gate post, but stand on duty outside the house, and keep your eye open. Remember you're a minion of the law, and try to act with some dignity. Now, go!

HEZ. I'm an onion of the law!

[EXIT D. R. C. *walking with dignity up stage.*]

JOSH. That boy'll be a Chief Justice some day. Now, Billy, tell me more about this fellow. How did he happen to be in your house last night?

BILLY. I've been trying to figure that out myself. Do you recollect my saying that he was a friend of Dudley's?

JOSH. Yes, I understood he was a sort of partner of his.

BILLY. And do you happen to remember that *you* mentioned in Dudley's presence that I didn't keep my money in the Warrenville bank?

JOSH. Yep, and do you remember you were very particular about tellin' him where you *did* keep it.

BILLY. I didn't dream that he was a thief, but now I believe we have a pair of them in the house, though the poor wretch who lies unconscious upstairs may be only a tool.

JOSH. Did he have anything to say?

BILLY. He hasn't spoken a word. Clytie discovered him first and came running for me. He was like a dead man until old Doc. Johnson got working on him; he came to for a few minutes, just looked around at us sort of dazed like, and then went off into a heavy sleep. Doc. says he'll be able to talk when he wakes up.

JOSH. How did he come to be in that condition?

BILLY. Well, Doc. says he's just dying of alcoholism, but

he must have had a shock of some kind to have sent him off into unconsciousness. Josh, I think this is going to develop into a right important case, don't you think you'd better send over to Warrentville for a *real* officer?

JOSH. A real officer! What do you call me?

BILLY. Being friends I don't like to tell you. Dudley is not a common crook. If he is implicated in this you'll want assistance.

JOSH. I have my deputy. This is the opportunity I've been waiting for; do you think I'm going to hand it over to one of them Warrentville Smart-Alecks? No—I'll do it single handed and alone!

BILLY. Well, of course that's *your* business; I've given you fair warning.

JOSH. Does Dudley know about the other fellow being discovered last night?

BILLY. No, and I don't want him to find it out until we learn what this other chap has to say. If Dudley suspected anything had gone wrong he'd skip out before we could catch him.

JOSH. Ah—never fear! Josh. Waterbury is on the job. I'll hang around careless-like outside until it is time to act. He can't leave the house without my seeing him. Now, don't get nervous, Billy; remember I'm just outside the door and I'll come to your assistance if anything happens. I'll put me deputy on guard at the other side of the house. (*Going towards R. C.*) Now, remember, Billy, whatever you do, don't get nervous! [EXIT D. R. C.]

BILLY (*laughs*). Don't get nervous! Well, if there was anything that would make me nervous, it would be Josh. (*Going toward R. U. E.*)

ENTER DUDLEY L. U. E.

DUDLEY. Good morning, Mr. Larkins.

BILLY (*turns*). Good morning.

DUDLEY. Didn't see you at breakfast this morning, in fact, you all seemed to have finished before I came down. Anything unusual going on?

BILLY. No—what makes you think so?

DUDLEY. Well, it may be only my imagination—but there seems to be an air of mystery about the house—Oh, by the way, I thought you told me the little room directly above mine was unoccupied.

BILLY. So it has been for a good many years.

DUDLEY. Well, if I'm not mistaken, there was someone moving about up there last night.

BILLY. Yes, the little girl Clytie slept there.

DUDLEY. Oh—is that so? And the other one that came with her?

BILLY. Bess. spent the night with Emmaline.

DUDLEY. Mr. Larkins, I'd like to mention a little matter to you, but I don't know just how you'll take it.

BILLY. Let's hear it.

DUDLEY. I want you to understand that I mean it for your own good. It's about the young woman you call Bess.

BILLY. Well, what about her?

DUDLEY. Just this. She is not a fit companion for your niece.

BILLY. On what grounds do you make that accusation?

DUDLEY. Well—of course a man doesn't like to say these things—but I feel a deep interest in your niece and it is for her sake that I mention the matter. I knew this woman a year ago in New York. At that time she did not bear a very good reputation. She was startled when she recognized me yesterday, but she has the impudence of her class. When I threatened to warn you against her, she defied me. When she learns that I have spoken she will most likely make up some ridiculous tale about me. Whatever she says you will be safe in *not* believing.

BILLY. Well, we'll cross that bridge when we come to it. As a rule I've found women more truthful than men. If there came a choice between her word and yours—

DUDLEY. Yes?

BILLY. Well, I'd take hers every time. I'm an old man, Mr. Dudley, and I believe I know a good woman when I see one. It will be her own lips, and no one else's, that will condemn her.

[EXIT R. U. E.]

DUDLEY (*aside*). Well, can you beat that. (*Sits on end of table, thinking*) That's a bad start-off. I should have made it a little stronger. I hope Watson got away all right; he must have done so, or I would have heard something about it.

ENTER CLYTIE and GRAHAM D. R. C. CLYTIE carries the dog. She has her hat decorated with field flowers, a collar of flowers around the dog's neck.

GRAHAM. I declare, Clytie, we loitered along the road so

disgracefully I'm afraid Uncle Billy will think we've run away.

CLYTIE. But look at all the pretty flowers I gathered. When I get into one of those daisy fields I hate to leave it.

DUDLEY (*at table L.*). And I see you've decorated your dog. Let's have a look at him.

CLYTIE (*hugging dog*). No. I'm very careful who I let him associate with.

DUDLEY (*insolently*). Oh, I see, one must be a minister to merit your good graces.

CLYTIE. Not exactly; but it's a long shot between you and a minister.

DUDLEY. You're rather an impertinent young woman considering the nameless little beggar that you are.

GRAHAM (*down R.*). That will do, Mr. Dudley. Mr. Larkins has seen fit to make this young lady a member of his household. She is not a beggar. At any rate, she hasn't as yet begged anything of you.

DUDLEY. Oh, I see she has gained a champion already. Well, I can't hope to hold out against such odds. As they say in the drama, I'll escape while there's yet time. Good morning.

[EXIT L. U. E.]

CLYTIE (*looking after him*). Go to——

GRAHAM. Clytie!

CLYTIE. I wasn't going to say what you thought. (*Approaches GRAHAM*) Minister, am I a beggar because I stay here?

GRAHAM. No, Clytie, you mustn't think that for a moment. Why, you are already earning your bread; besides, these good people are very glad to have you.

CLYTIE. If I thought I was, I'd take the mutt and hike out this minute.

GRAHAM. You love that old dog, don't you, Clytie?

CLYTIE. You bet I do. Why, he's all I've ever had to love except Bess. Say, its pretty tough when you've got a whole lot of love stored up in here and nobody to spend it on, ain't it?

GRAHAM. Yes, I should think it would be. But that is remedied now. You are surely going to love uncle Billy; everybody does.

CLYTIE. Yes, I love him like forty already.

GRAHAM. Then there is Miss Philura. (*CLYTIE winks at him*) She is a dear good woman, Clytie; and I think she's fond of you.

CLYTIE. She's been awful good to me, and honest I like her ever so much.

GRAHAM. And Emmaline?

CLYTIE. I like her too.

GRAHAM. Well, there's three. That's a pretty good start.

CLYTIE. But you forgot somebody else.

GRAHAM. Did I? It can't be Hez. Green.

CLYTIE. Oh, no—

GRAHAM. The constable. (CLYTIE *shakes her head*)
Then who can it be?

CLYTIE. You. You forgot yourself, didn't you?

GRAHAM. Well, I'll be honest. I really didn't forget. I wanted *you* to say it.

ENTER EMMALINE *on step leading to L. U. E.*

EMMA. Oh, Clytie, will you tell uncle Billy that the man upstairs is awake and is talking.

CLYTIE. Is that so, what's he saying?

EMMA. He mumbles his words so I can't quite understand, but he keeps calling Margaret, Margaret.

CLYTIE. Just like he did last night. I'll go tell uncle Billy. [EXIT R. U. E.]

GRAHAM. Mr. Larkins sent Clytie for me this morning; she has been telling me on the way over something of what happened last night.

EMMA. Will you come up and see him, Mr. Graham; I can't understand what he wants.

GRAHAM. Certainly; I came over to make myself useful. Where is he?

EMMA. In the little att^{ic} room. Come, I'll show you.

[EXIT EMMALINE L. U. E. *followed by* GRAHAM.]

ENTER JOSH. *and* HEZ. D. R. C.

JOSH (*looks around*). Everything is just the same as we left it, Hez. It's about time some developments were—er—developin'.

HEZ. Say, I'm stiff from standin' like a post out there so long; I don't think I want to be a boney fido.

JOSH. You're a sworn officer of the law, and you've got to do your duty. There are two dangerous criminals in this house and they've got to be captured. The sick one I'm not afraid of, because the two of us can handle him all right; but Dudley's the fellow that's goin' to give us trouble.

HEZ. How do you think we'll catch him?

JOSH. We'll have to use strategy. We'll tell him the the house is surrounded.

HEZ. Surrounded by what?

JOSH. By a fence, you booby; but we won't tell him that.

HEZ. And then what'll we do?

JOSH. Well, if we once get him frightened, all we've got to do is to slip the handcuffs on him.

HEZ. Well, you'll have to do that, because I don't know how.

JOSH. Come here, and I'll show you. (*Takes handcuffs from pocket*) Hold out your hand.

HEZ. (*edging off*). Go away from yer—I don't want those things on me.

JOSH. I'm just goin' to show you how to operate 'em, in case I need your assistance. (*HEZ. comes back, holds out his right arm*) Now, watch me closely. You slip it under the wrist like that, and snap it quick like that, and there she is as tight as wax.

HEZ. Gee—dat's easy—lemme see if I kin do it. (*Takes other link in his left hand*) Hold out your hand, you murderer.

JOSH (*holds out his left arm*). Now, don't get too realistic, Hez.

HEZ. You hold it under the wrist like that, and snap she goes. Dere you are, a pair of the biggest scoundrels that ever walked the earth.

JOSH. Hez., your imagination is entirely too healthy. Now, to take 'em off.

HEZ. Yes, I'm beginnin' to feel like a villain. I'll want to cut your throat in a minute.

JOSH (*feeling in his right pocket for key*). Stop that kind of talk, Hez., I don't like it.

HEZ. Well, hurry up wid the key.

JOSH (*hand in empty pocket—a startled expression on his face*). Gosh-amighty—it's gone!

HEZ. (*jumps*). W-h-a-t!

JOSH. The key's gone, Hez. (*Quickly goes into vest pocket*) It was in this pocket this morning.

HEZ. This mornin' be hanged; where is it *NOW*?

JOSH. How do I know—it's lost—vanished—gone beyond recall. And here we are locked together like a pair of Siamese twins. Hez. Green, that was your fault, gol darn ye—go away from me—I hate the sight of you.

HEZ. Gee—dat gives me an idea for a poem.

JOSH. If you commence any of that poetizing while you're hitched up to me, I'll wollop the life out of you.

ENTER PHILURA R. U. E. *Remains at door.*

PHILURA. Hez. Green, you here again; you're getting to be as bad as Josh. Waterbury. He almost lives here. Josh. as long as you've got so much time on hand, I'll put you to work fixing my shelves in the pantry. Hez., you go home.

HEZ. Yes'm. (*Remains still*)

JOSH. Go home, Hez., don't you hear Philura talkin' to you.

PHILURA. Josh., did ye hear what I said. You come out in the pantry.

JOSH. I'm comin', Philura. (*Goes a few steps toward R. U. E. HEZ. of course goes with him*)

PHILURA. So is Hez. What's the matter with you two; I didn't know you were such close friends.

JOSH. We're very much attached to each other, ain't we, Hez.?

HEZ. Yes, Josh thinks a heap of me, don't you, Josh?

JOSH. Yes, I love you like a brother, gol darn ye!

PHILURA. Well, you're acting like a pair of idiots.

[EXIT R. U. E.]

HEZ. Say, how are we goin' to get out of these things?

JOSH. We'll have to go all the way back to Jim Slocum, the locksmith, and we'll have to run like Halifax every step of the way. Now, take a good breath and make a start, for it's goin' to be a hard race. (*They both take a long breath, start with long strides out D. R. C., and past the window going L.*)

ENTER GRAHAM, L. U. E. *leading WATSON. WATSON is in shirtsleeves, collar off, is extremely weak, leans heavily on GRAHAM'S arm.*

GRAHAM. There, take your time, there's no hurry. (*Make toward large chair R. C. slowly*)

WATSON. Yes, there is, you don't know, I must get away, I must get away.

GRAHAM. My dear man, you are hardly able to walk; there'll be no getting away for you until you are stronger. (*Places him in chair R. C.*)

ENTER BILLY R. U. E.

WATSON (*sinking into chair*). You think so? You're mis-

taken. I'm all right. All I need is a little whiskey to give me strength.

BILLY (*coming down R.*). Doctor said you weren't to have a drop until he saw you again.

WATSON. Doctor? Have I been ill?

BILLY. Yes, you've been unconscious since last night.

WATSON. Ah—I remember. I had a fright. I thought the grave never gave up its dead. Now I know that it does.

BILLY. What do you mean, my man?

WATSON. Margaret came to me last night, Margaret Larkins as she was when I first knew her.

BILLY. Margaret Larkins! What was Margaret Larkins to you?

WATSON. She was my wife. (*Buries head in hands*)

BILLY (*raises his arm as if to strike*). What!

GRAHAM (*stays his hand*). Uncle Billy.

BILLY (*lowers hand*). So you are the scoundrel that ruined my daughter's life, and you dare to come here after all the misery and suffering you've brought on this house.

WATSON (*his face in hands*). I didn't know—I didn't know.

BILLY. Where is my Margaret's baby, tell me that, and I'll try to forgive you all the rest.

WATSON. I lost her. I was drinking and she wandered away from me in the streets.

BILLY. And you never found her?

ENTER CLYTIE R. U. E.

WATSON. I've never seen her from that day to this. What shall I say to her mother when I meet her face to face. Listen. I saw Margaret last night; she stood in the moonlight in the little room upstairs, and she looked at me with pitying eyes. If she can forgive me, perhaps God will be as good. (*Sees CLYTIE who has come down R.; he half rises, points to her, and whispers*) Who is that?

BILLY. That's a child we've given a home to.

WATSON. Look at her, can't you see, you who loved Margaret so well, can't you see the likeness? It is Margaret Larkins herself who stands before you.

CLYTIE. That's what he called me last night.

WATSON. It was you then. Child, who are you?

CLYTIE (*goes to WATSON*). I don't know. An old woman found me in the streets when a baby.

WATSON. She found you where I lost you, outside a saloon door?

CLYTIE. That's what she told me.

ENTER EMMALINE L. U. E. *Remains there.*

WATSON. Are you all blind? This is Margaret's child. Could any two beings resemble each other so much except mother and daughter. You see her story and mine are the same.

BILLY. My Margaret's little girl. (*Takes CLYTIE in his arms*) It must be so. My heart knew her for its own, even if my old eyes failed me.

CLYTIE. What does it mean, uncle Billy?

ENTER BESS., R. U. E. *Remains there.*

BILLY. It means that you are my grandchild, honey. That man is your father.

CLYTIE (*runs and kneels beside WATSON'S chair*). My father. Why, I never knew I had one.

WATSON. I'm not worthy, child; I never 'deserved the name.

CLYTIE. You are my father just the same. (*Rises*) Why, I've got a family after all. A father, a grandfather, an aunt, a cousin—but the best of all I'll never know. (*Turns to BILLY*)

BILLY. We'll try to make it up to you, honey.

ENTER DUDLEY L. U. E.—*comes partly down L. then pauses.*

DUDLEY (*sees WATSON—startled—whispers*). Watson! Oh, pardon me—this seems to be a family affair, I'll go.

BILLY. Wait, Mr. Dudley; there's a little matter here that needs explaining. This man is your friend and partner, what was he doing in my house last night?

DUDLEY. Ask *him*. I'm as much surprised to see him here as you can possibly be.

WATSON. I came to steal, and Dudley knows it.

DUDLEY. He lies. Why, look at the man, if you can call him that. A repulsive, drunken wreck. Is there any one here who would take his word against mine?

BESS. (*comes partly down R.*). Yes, I would.

DUDLEY. You!

BESS. Yes, you thought I'd be afraid to speak, didn't you. I don't know this man (*Pointing to WATSON*) Mr. Larkins, but he is probably another of Dudley's tools that he is tired

of and wishes to cast aside. That's his way. When he has no further use for you he tries to get rid of you.

DUDLEY. Mr. Larkins, I warned you against this woman; she is doing just what I said she would.

BILLY. You know this man Dudley, do you?

BESS. Yes, but his name wasn't Dudley a year ago; it was Dick Heyward, the bank thief.

BILLY. What were you to him?

BESS. I thought I was his wife.

DUDLEY. That's a lie, she knew better. Mr. Larkins, there's no chance for a man with a clever woman like that against him. I have told you the truth about her, believe it or not as you like; but the same roof can't shelter us both. Since she stays, I'll go. (*Goes up to L. C.*) You have two pretty specimens on your hands, Mr. Larkins; I'd advise you to get rid of them both. [EXIT L. U. E.]

BILLY. That will be soon done. This man is a criminal—

GRAHAM. But he will never live to see a prison cell. (*CLYTIE goes to WATSON*)

BILLY (*to BESS.*). As for you, young woman, you leave my house to-day.

GRAHAM. Mr. Larkins—

BILLY. I'll have no woman of doubtful character under my roof.

GRAHAM. Uncle Billy, listen to me. You made a mistake like this sixteen years ago when you refused your daughter a home. You see what the consequences have been. One mistake like that in a lifetime is enough; don't repeat it.

BILLY. She admits she was no wife.

GRAHAM. She is more sinned against than sinning. The woman is too often punished; the man too often goes free.

BESS. You are very good, Mr. Graham, but you are only one man against the whole world. Mr. Larkins is doing what most people would do under the circumstances. I must go. (*Goes up c.*)

CLYTIE. Wait, Bess. I'm going with you. (*Goes to BESS*)

BILLY. Clytie, come here; you don't understand, child. She is not a good woman.

CLYTIE. She was good enough to give me a home when I didn't have a place to lay my head—she is the best friend I ever had; if she is not good enough to stay here then I'm not.

GRAHAM (*to BILLY*). You see—you will lose Clytie too.

BILLY. I can't do that. I can never again part with my Margaret's child. I give in.

BESS. I will not stay, sir, if I'm not welcome.

BILLY. I will try to make you so. I'm a harsh old man, but I've suffered; you must forgive me.

CLYTIE (*leading BESS. down L.*). Come, Bess, you gave me a home once; I'm going to give you one now.

ENTER DUDLEY L. U. E. *with suit cases.* EMMALINE R. U. E. *remains on step.* PHILURA R. C.

DUDLEY. I regret this sudden departure, but my room seems to be more welcome than my company. Good-day.

ENTER JOSH. and HEZ., *meet DUDLEY at R. C.*

JOSH. Not so fast, sir. You are our prisoner! (JOSH *has large pistol, HEZ. handcuffs. They are breathing heavily*)

CURTAIN.

(*Second curtain. JOSH and HEZ. holding DUDLEY'S coat—DUDLEY off.*)

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